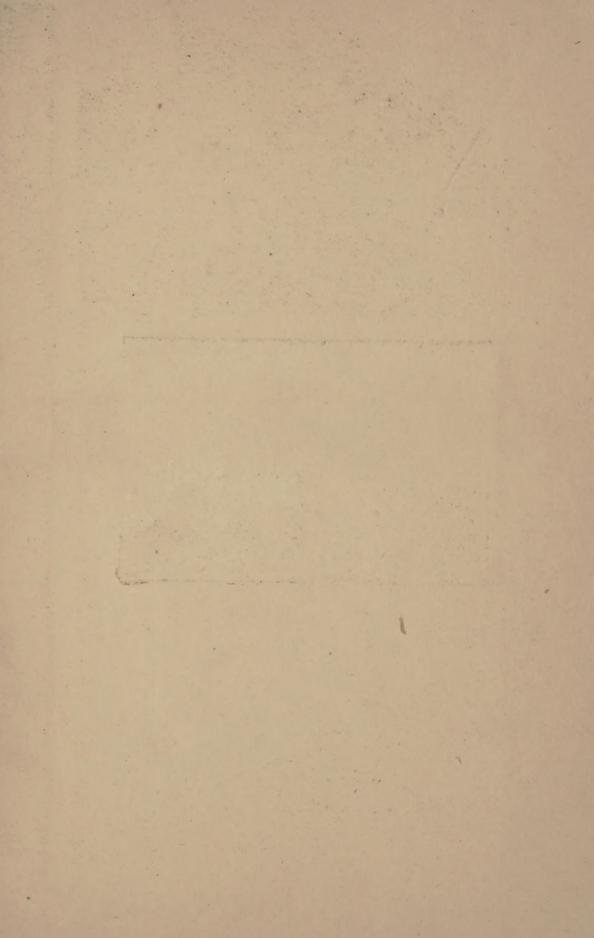
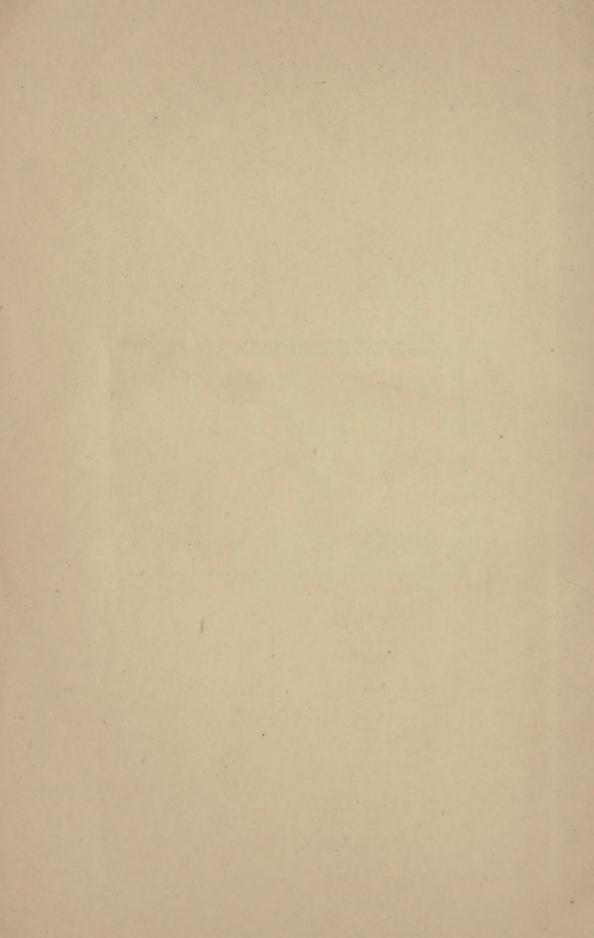


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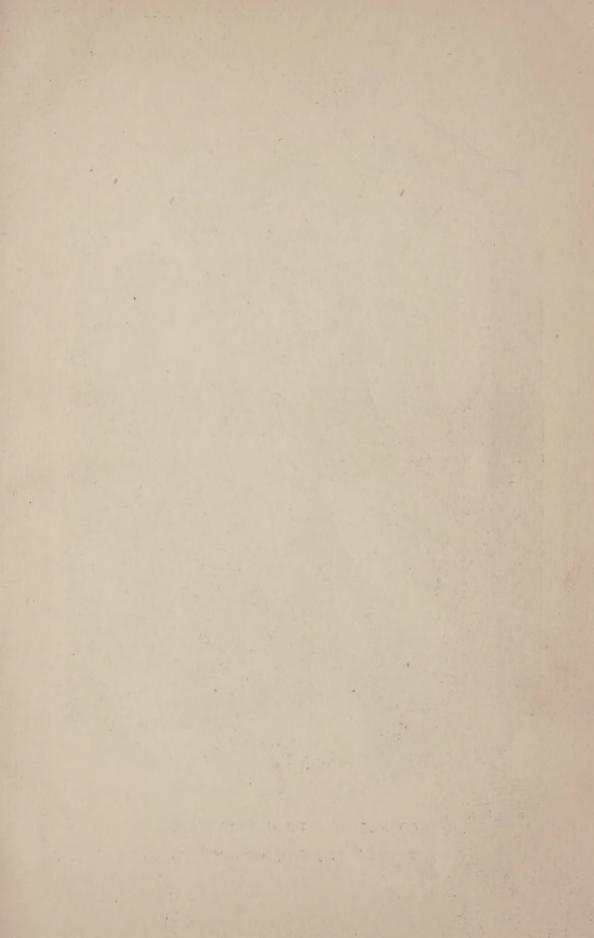
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Frontispiece.

LEO RETURNS TO HIS MOTHER.
"My Mother!"—"My dear, dear Son!" p. 231.

Whom the Lord Loveth He Chasteneth.

THE ADVENTURES
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LEO REMBRANDT

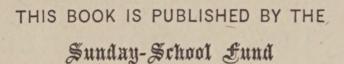
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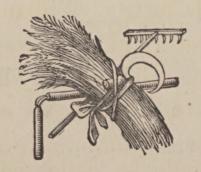
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THE ADVENTURES

OF

LEO REMBRANDT.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE ON THE BEACH.

the right, that we may keep away from the sand,—so, my lad! There, now, we have brought in all our fish safely.

"Mother will be delighted, when we get home; she need have no care now for a whole week. At the very lowest I can

sell them for three dollars in Bremen, because some of them are splendid fellows. Only look at this haddock, Willy! It alone will weigh nine or ten pounds, and there are other large fellows, with a quantity of codfish besides. It may be that I shall get even more than three dollars for them.

"Fasten the chain, Willy! You need only wind it a couple of times around the stake and fasten the hook. That's it—now help me to carry the fish to the house."

The speaker was a stout, handsome lad, about eighteen years of age, who had been out fishing on the sea with Willy, his younger brother. The whole appearance of the boat, the nets lying in a heap, the costume of the two handsome lads, showed plainly enough that they followed the business of fishing, and were neither unskillful nor unsuccessful. They loaded themselves with their spoils, and Willy was about to take the oars along, when his brother prevented him, saying:

"Let them be. Early in the morning I must go to Bremen, and no one will come during the night to take the oars away; at least I wouldn't advise any one to do it."

Willy threw the oars back into the boat, and stepped out spryly on to the beach, after his brother, and then turned to the right, where a small, pleasant-looking, one-story house, covered with red tiles, was in full view.

Dear reader, have you ever seen a house so neat, so tasteful, so attractive, in a word so home-like, that you said to yourself: "Oh that it were mine? I could spend a whole lifetime there!" This little house, which the brothers were approaching, was one of that kind.

The sun was just going down, and the lower edge of its disc had nearly reached the surface of the sea. The whole sky was covered with a clear, transparent, warm ruddiness, which was reflected upwards, from the placid waters, as from a mirror. Some cloudlets of a roseate hue

floated slowly through the transparent atmosphere, and over the bright waters of the sea were gliding a few ships, whose wide-spread sails of dazzling brightness stood out against the purple-clad heavens in the west like gigantic swans, softly but swiftly moving over the flashing waves.

The last rays of the sun lay like a broad, polished sword-blade on the surface of the water, and thence shone away off, as though sending a parting greeting to the little house, which looked down from the high bank far over the sea. Its brightly-polished windows flashed brilliantly in the sun's rays, while the dazzling light was somewhat subdued so as to be pleasant and grateful to the eye, by the broad leaves of the wild grape-vines, which covered the front up to the eaves, and encased the windows with their rich green.

It was in the first half of the beautiful month of May, and all the verdure of the trees, the shrubs and the budding plants

in the garden, was refreshingly bright and lovely. The little house lay right in the midst of this verdure. A magnificent linden shaded it with its powerful branches; the garden lay behind, stretching out, on both sides, far beyond the walls of the house, with its arbor of elder-bushes, and thicket of red-flowering honey-suckles, purple lilacs and white snow-balls; and a little grove of birch trees formed the background, with their slender, silver-white stems, tender shoots and millions of bright, green leaves, whispering in the evening breeze. Over this perfectly lovely picture the setting sun cast its light, and wove its parting rays into the luxuriant foliage, like threads of gold in delicate, green tapestry.

Yes, it was a pretty house! Small, indeed, and limited in its accommodations, but still large enough for its contented occupants—the good mother Martha, and her sons, Leo and Willy. But it was the magnificent location, with the far-reaching view of the glorious ocean, and its

continual changes and manifold beauties, which made it appear, at first glance, so charming and home-like.

Leo laid his burden down in front of the house, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"Take the fish into the house, Willy," he said to his brother. "I will go down again and bring the nets. But tell mother that I shall be back presently. Do you hear?"

Willy nodded, and Leo went with a quick step back to the shore. At the bend of the road, he met an elderly man, dressed in black, who, greeting him with a slight inclination of the head, inquired: "Does Frau Martha Rembrandt live in the little house above?"

Leo looked sharply at the stranger, and hesitated with his answer, not from want of courtesy, but because he asked himself this question: "What can this man want with my mother?"

"Well, are you dumb, or don't you

know who lives there?" cried the stranger somewhat impatiently.

"I should certainly know where my mother lives," replied Leo. "Only go right up; if she is not in the house you will find her in the garden. Willy will show you. I would go back with you myself, but you see, I must fetch my nets and hang them up to dry, or they will rot for me."

The stranger made no answer, but struck the path to the house, while Leo went quickly down the steep slope to the shore, threw the heavy nets, without much effort, over his powerful shoulders, and as quickly returned to the house. He was very curious as to the business that brought the stranger to his mother's house, and felt like delaying the hanging up of his nets to dry until a later hour. But duty was to be done before any thing else. With swift hands he began his task, and finished it in a few minutes. Then he entered the house quickly, and,

finding Willy in the front room, asked after his mother and the stranger.

"He is out in the arbor," replied Willy.

"Do you know what brought him there?"

"No, Leo. But I saw that his pockets were full of papers, all of which he spread out on the table there."

"Ah ha! I must see after him," said Leo. "The man doesn't please me; he was very short with me, when I met him on my way for the nets. I hope that he will not give mother any trouble, or he will find that I shan't tamely bear it."

"Oh, stay here, Leo," begged Willy. "Mother sent me out of the garden when the stranger came, and she wouldn't be pleased if you went out. But see, I believe he is going already.".

"You are right, he is!" said Leo, looking out of the window. "Now I will ask mother at once, what wind brought him here."

Leo went quickly into the garden. There the mother was still sitting in the arbor, not employing her hands in busy work as was her custom, but deeply absorbed in thought and supporting her head sadly on her hands. The net which she had evidently been knitting during the afternoon, lay half finished by her side, and before her, spread out upon the table, was a large document upon which she was gazing sadly. When Leo came up to her quickly, she screamed and tried to conceal the paper from him. But he had already seen it, and observed the expression of deep sadness, which was unmistakably stamped upon the mild countenance of his mother.

"What is the matter, my good mother?" said Leo, astonished. "You are weeping. What did the stranger want with you? If he has insulted you—he can't be far away, I will go after him and make him apologize on his knees to you."

"No, oh no, Leo," replied the mother, seizing her son's hand. "The man is not the cause of my grief. He only performed his duty in bringing me sad and

very painful tidings. Let him go in peace, my son."

"And what kind of tidings were they?" asked Leo. "They must have been very painful since they have drawn tears from your eyes. Dearest mother, don't conceal anything from me! You know that you can trust me."

"It would be of no use, even if I were willing to conceal it from you, my good son!" replied the mother. "In a few weeks you would learn the whole, and the stroke would be only the more difficult for you to bear if you were not prepared for it. Leo! a bad man, who has already greatly wronged not only me but your sainted father also, wants now to seize our last possession—this little house, and to plunge us mercilessly into misery."

Leo was shocked, but, recovering himself, said, "Who is this man? Has he the right to deprive us of our property? If he has not right and law upon his side, mother, he shall first have to deal with me."

"He has the power, my dear son, the power, although I still doubt whether he has the right," answered the mother, and shook her head sorrowfully and hopelessly. "The law has already decided once in his favor, and I fear that, in the present case, it would not decide to his disadvantage. Oh, he might take all,—except this little house. This is our last place of refuge. Here we have lived for so many years in quiet contentment.—All except this garden, in which your poor father sleeps the sleep of death. It will break my heart if I must leave it,—if I can pray no more at his grave,—if I dare with flowers no more decorate the place where his mortal remains repose."

"No, never shall any one drive you away from this place, mother, if I can prevent it," said Leo, deeply moved.

"He must be a bad man, indeed, who can reconcile himself to the thought of robbing a widow of her last possession. But how dare he do it, mother? The house and the garden belong to you!"

"I believed and hoped they did, my son," replied the mother, "but the stranger, who has just taken his leave, has deprived me of that hope.

"Listen, Leo, it is a sorrowful story, but I may just as well tell you now as at another time. Your father was, as you are aware, a shipmaster, owning a small house in Bremen, and a river boat which enabled him to earn his bread honestly. Oh that he had not been deluded by the desire of improving the humble position in which we were living so contentedly and happily! But when you were only seven years old and Willy but five, the tempter came to your father. He proposed that your father should sell his river boat and devote the proceeds to the purchase of a sea-going vessel. He offered to furnish the additional amount of money needed in purchasing such a vessel, and they were to carry on the business in partnership.

"The offer seemed sufficiently attractive. Your father accepted it, and made a great deal of money indeed in the new business. A portion of his profits was devoted to the purchase of this house and garden, so that he might have accommodations for himself when loading or unloading his freight, and as the situation of the little house and the beautiful country around it pleased me very much, we were in the habit of spending the whole summer here.

"But, it happened, as you recollect very well, that your father was taken sick. He was obliged to entrust the command of his vessel to other hands, and it along with its freight was destroyed in a fearful storm at sea. When this information was communicated to your father, he was alarmed, but did not lose his spirits. 'The loss is not as great as it seems,' he said to me. 'The vessel and freight were insured at their full value, and with industry the loss may be repaired in a year. Oh, that I were only well again!' This wish of your father was never attained, in accordance with

the inscrutable designs of God. Whether your father was more affected by the information of the loss of the vessel than he manifested to us, or from some other cause—God only knows—his sickness increased. The fever increased fearfully, he lost his reason and, within a few weeks after the loss of the vessel, God called him to Himself.

"That was a heavy, sad, sorrowful hour for me, Leo! You and your brother were still too young to feel the severity of the stroke, but it fell with all its weight upon me, so that I almost sank under it. I was only enabled to sustain it by the consciousness that it was my first duty to care for you, his orphans.

"This loss, however, was not enough. God wished to lay upon me a still greater trial, and another blow followed, of which I had not the slightest suspicion.

"In accordance with the words of your sainted father, I supposed that we should be spared the great care of securing means for our support. The lost vessel had been insured, and the half of its value should be paid over to me. In addition to this, we should have the house in Bremen, and this little house in which we now live. Some weeks passed by, without my receiving any information from your father's business-partner. At length I wrote to him, and begged that he would send me the amount that I should have for you and Willy.

"He answered me very briefly, that I had not the slightest claim upon him, in-asmuch as, although the lost vessel had been insured, it had been done at his own expense, and not at that of your father, on which account he would retain the whole amount of the insurance. Moreover, he asserted that he had other claims upon your father, and if I did not refrain from disturbing him, he would seize upon your father's estate. Well, I considered it my duty to seek the advice of a lawyer, but, alas! he gave me little hope.

"'The man is a villain! said he. 'No one believes that the vessel was insured

at his sole expense, and he would not have made such an assertion if your husband had been alive. Nevertheless he will keep the money, because he can undoubtedly establish his statement as true. He who deviates from the path of right for the sake of Mammon, will always find ways and means to complete his fraud, and an earthly judge is seldom, or never, able to bring him to account. It is true he can never escape the Heavenly Judge.'

"But what shall I do?" I asked the

lawyer.

"We agreed to institute a suit at law against the dishonest man, which resulted as we had feared. The swindler produced papers, whose genuineness he established, which caused the judge to decide in his favor, although at heart he was convinced, like the rest of us, that a shameful fraud had been committed. The scorn with which the swindler was treated, had such an effect upon him, that he did not dare to press the pretended claims that he asserted he held against the estate of your

father. These he withdrew, but I was compelled to sell the Bremen house, in order to pay the costs of the suit and to take care of you, my children, until you were old enough to earn your bread by your own industry. With God's help I succeeded in this.

"The money has long since been exhausted, but the business of fishing, which you undertook, my good Leo, has thus far kept us free from all anxiety on the score of food. We could have continued to live happily and peacefully together, but that this villain again wishes to destroy our peace. He claims that your father owed him three hundred dollars, and says that if I do not pay him that amount he will have the house, garden and everything belonging to us sold.

"This is the information which the man, who was just here, gave me. On account of it I have been greatly troubled, for the law will decide in favor of the dishonest man, and we —— we shall be thrown, helpless and without means, out

upon the highway. Oh, heavenly Father! What will become of us, should they take away the boat, the nets—the means we have employed to protect us from distress and suffering?"

"Mother, that shall never be done as long as I live!" said Leo, firmly clenching his teeth. "I would like to see the man who can tear my property away from me,—my property, I say, for the boat and nets are mine, honestly earned by the labor of my hands. Don't grieve, mother! To-morrow I will row to the city, and will find out there what is to be done. Only tell me the name of the lawyer who took charge of your case before, and that of the miserable fellow who swindled you. I must know both, mother, so that I can act!"

"The courageous lawyer's name was Liborius, who lives near the Town Hall—any child can show you where," replied the mother. "The other man was Elshöft, the shipmaster, your father's nearest relative."

"Elshöft! Mother!" cried out Leo, astonished. "Ah, now all is clear to me. This is the reason why I was not allowed to call upon our relative, when I went to Bremen. But why, mother, did you keep the injury which this man did us, so long concealed from me?"

"To preserve your youthful heart from untimely hatred, my son!" replied the mother. "You ought never to have learned how many bitter hours, how many sorrowful, tearful nights that man caused me. He should have been your guardian and Willy's, after your father's death; but, turning a deaf ear to the voice of nature, your nearest blood-relation has been the cause of our bitterest sufferings."

Leo stood a long time in deep thought, leaning silently against one of the posts of the arbor. Then he said:

"Don't despair, mother! The plans of the wicked are often brought to shame by Him, who is the Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows. Let us pray that God will support us in our need, and will not suffer lies to triumph over truth. However this man's claim may be decided, you shall retain the house and garden as long as you live. You may rely upon that, mother!"

In vain the distressed woman urged her son to tell her by what plan he proposed to avert the stroke which threatened them. Leo kept it secret, but repeated his assurances, and by his confident manner comforted the oppressed heart of his mother. When the shades of evening came on, and a cool wind blew from the sea, she gathered up her work and went with Leo into the house. He remained quiet and reserved all the evening, although one could see that he was forming some plan which might be effectual in overthrowing the wicked designs of Herr Elshöft.



CHAPTER II.

A GOOD DEED BEARS GOOD FRUIT.

tain he was acquainted, having taken Leo's boat in tow, he found himself, about noon of the next day, in Bremen. His trip had been both quick and pleasant. Soon after his arrival, his fish were sold at a good price, and he went to ask the advice of Herr Liborius about Herr Elshöft. The house was readily found, and Herr Liborius listened attentively and patiently while he was making his statement. Then, the lawyer took Elshöft's account, examined it, and shook his head.

"This claim is like that made, eight or nine years ago," he said. "I would stake any amount upon it that the claim is fraudulent, but the scoundrel will gain

25

his case as soon as it comes to trial, because the only person who could expose his false statements, your sainted father, cannot come back from the other world. Nevertheless, Leo, I will undertake the case. We shall have to run the risk of his swearing falsely as he did before. Perhaps his hardened conscience may be so touched that he will renounce his pretended claim, when he finds that we are not frightened by his threats."

"No, no; that he will never do; he is too greedy for that!" said Leo. "It is better that I get the money and pay him!"

"So that he may come again in a few years and demand probably a thousand dollars instead of three hundred," said Herr Liborius. "God forbid! This rascality must be so dealt with, that these three hundred shall be the last he can squeeze out of you. Only let me manage the business, my lad! Tell the untruthful, deceitful fellow, to come to me in case he persists in his fraudulent claim."

"But if it should come to trial, the expense will be very great," said Leo, modestly. "And I don't believe that I can raise more than three hundred dollars."

"Don't let that trouble you, my son," replied Herr Liborius, tapping Leo pleasantly upon the shoulder. "That expense I will bear. Your sainted father, during his lifetime, did me many a favor and many a good service, and as far as it lies in my power, I wish to reciprocate these to his children. Let us be quiet on that point. But tell me now, my dear fellow, where will you get the three hundred dollars which this villain demands of you?"

Leo was somewhat reluctant to answer, but Herr Liborius urged him so earnestly that finally he opened his heart and communicated his plan to his sympathizing friend.

"My neighbor Steffen Rohrteich told me," said Leo, "that Herr Melchior Bunkendorf, a wealthy Bremen merchant, has fitted out a large new vessel, which he proposes to send, this summer, to the whale fishery, but that he is still in need of sailors. Steffen said, Herr Bunkendorf had offered excellent inducements to men who would go on the northern voyage. Now I intend to offer myself as one of his crew, if it is true that each one will receive three hundred dollars in gold, on his return from the Arctic Ocean."

"Hum!" muttered Herr Liborius—"then, for love of your mother, you would encounter the cold, the ice, and the bears of the North! But, see, my lad! that is very good of you, and it pleases me very much; but indeed you are altogether too young to endure such hardships, and to undergo such perils. And, moreover, who will take care of your mother, while you are away?"

"Willy! my Brother Willy!" quickly replied Leo. "He is a good fellow—and already a pretty skillful fisherman. Besides he is old enough, for he will be seventeen at his next birthday. No: I

have no fear for mother, while Willy stays with her."

"But will your mother consent that you should leave her, for the purpose of exposing yourself to such great perils?" inquired Herr Liborius, deliberately shaking his head. "A voyage to the coast of Greenland is no child's play, Leo, and I fear lest you may repent a rash resolution, when it will be too late to retrace your steps."

"I will not repent it, should it even cost my life," answered Leo. "No, no, my good mother, who has already endured so much sorrow, shall not, in addition, lose the little property which she holds so dear to her heart. I am strong and healthy, Herr Liborius, and, I believe, am not without a courageous, persevering spirit. Be the cold never so fierce, the danger that shall surround me never so great, the sufferings that I must undergo never so bitter; I shall bear them all cheerfully, if I can only succeed in drying my mother's tears. Yes, I would rather

die than see her suffer. A year will soon pass away, my dear sir, and, if God protects me, as I devoutly believe He will, I can return home with a double measure of happiness. Certainly, Herr Liborius, my mother must be assisted, and I consider it my most pressing duty to do everything in my power for her."

"Certainly, certainly, my lad, and far be it from me to dissuade you from your plan," replied Herr Liborius. "Nevertheless I fear lest your sacrifice may be of little use! The voyage may be protracted, misfortune may happen to the vessel and crew, and God may so order it, that you yourself will not return alive. I do not fear that He will withhold His mighty aid in so good and bold an undertaking, but on the contrary, believe that He will give it. Still, my dear lad, it is proper to consider the possibility of an unfavorable termination. Suppose, now, you should not return? Your pay would then be lost, and your mother would lose

a brave son, whose strong arm could provide for the evening of her life."

"That is true, and I have also thought of it," replied Leo, gently and sadly. "But, my dear sir," he added more boldly, "the issue is in the hands of the Lord, and my intentions at least are good. If God should end my life,—well! He can find other ways and means to protect my good mother from her great sufferings, and my brother Willy will never desert her, for he loves her as dearly as I do. But, Herr Liborius, I have a deep and abiding trust in my faithful Saviour; and, inasmuch as I can find no other way to secure my mother from the persecutions of that scoundrel, relying upon the care and goodness of God I will risk my life in this. Our Divine Lord will help me, Herr Liborius!"

"Then your resolution, Leo, is unalterably fixed?" asked Herr Liborius, feelingly. "Will you bid defiance to every peril, every danger-will you encounter the terrible cold of the North, for your mother's sake?"

"Yes, that I will; I will shun nothing. I could not be hindered even by greater perils, if I knew that the fruit of my labor would inure to the benefit of my mother," answered Leo, firmly.

"Well then," said Herr Liborius, "I am not blessed with wealth, but listen, my lad, to the promise I make you: that your mother shall not lose her house should you even not return from your Arctic voyage. I give you this assurance to take along with you, and you may rely upon it that old Liborius will keep his word. Now, come along! I will go with you to Herr Bunkendorf. You are still very young, and perhaps he might reject you if you had no one to intercede for you. Come, come, my lad! Melchior Bunkendorf is a very good friend of mine; and I think he will be satisfied with my security for your good conduct."

Herr Liborius put on another coat, took his hat and cane, and went with Leo

to the place of business of the rich merchant in question.

Leo was astounded on entering the house; a crowd of people was there waiting to speak with Herr Bunkendorf, and numerous clerks, apprentices and packers were busily moving hither and thither. Amid this bustle and confusion, had he come alone he would have lost the heart to mention his business. But Herr Liborius quickly made his way through all the confusion, and seizing his protege by the hand entered a tolerably spacious room, where Herr Bunkendorf was sitting with some of his clerks at a large desk, engaged by turns in examining his account books, speaking to his partners, or in paying out and receiving money. In a word, he was very busy. But when he spied Herr Liborius, he left everything else, pushed back his spectacles on his forehead, hastened to the Lawyer and shook his hand heartily.

"What wind brings you here, my dear friend Liborius?" he asked.

"A wind from the North," replied the lawyer, laughing. "Look at this young lad here! Isn't he a handsome fellow?"

Herr Bunkendorf cast a rapid glance at Leo, and nodded assent. "What does he want?" he inquired. "You have some design in bringing him with you. Can I aid or assist him in any way? Out with it, Liborius?"

"Missed the mark, friend," replied the lawyer. "It is my young friend who wishes to aid and assist you. That is to say, he wants to go North to aid you in catching whales."

"Hum, hum!" muttered Herr Bunkendorf, measuring Leo at the same time from head to foot. Leo stood the inspection quietly, and gazed at the merchant with such an ingenuous, but modest and firm expression of countenance, as though he wished to say: "Only try me once, my dear sir. You can rest your house upon my fidelity, honest zeal and probity."

"A little too young, although quite sound and hearty," Herr Bunkendorf

said in a semi-audible tone to the lawyer. "Well, let us see. Hum! Liborius, there must be some peculiar circumstances connected with the youth, or you would not have brought him here. Dare you communicate them, my old friend?"

Liborius nodded assent, took the rich merchant in a corner, and spoke with him for some time in a low tone of voice. Herr Bunkendorf nodded and shook his head, hummed frequently, pushed his spectacles up and down, looked repeatedly at Leo, and finally seized the lawyer's hand affectionately.

"Hum, hum! The lad shall go along!" he said. "And as for his pay I can just as readily give it now as later. Noble Hum, hum! Heaven will protect him until he returns. And if he shouldn't return-hum, then it will be all the same, whether the expedition costs a few hundred dollars more or not. Get the money, Liborius, from my cashier, and settle with that rascal, Elshöft. He is a good-for-nothing fellow. He'll get his punishment after a while. Hum! where is Bertram staying—it is time for him—Hum, ha, here he is!"

The door opened and a broad-shouldered, stalwart man entered, with an open, pleasant, ruddy face, clear sharp eyes, and a gait which instantly betrayed the sailor. He greeted Herr Bunkendorf, who had beckoned to him, respectfully but with a species of simple-hearted self-reliance.

"How are you getting along with the Dolphin, Captain Bertram?" he inquired. "Is your crew made up?"

"Almost, Governor!" replied the captain. "I have enrolled thirty merry fellows, thoroughly tough sailors, temperate, intelligent, healthy, and some of them already accustomed to the Northern winters. We only need six more to complete the complement, and five of those Martin, my pilot, will bring with him to-day. I want to state, Governor, that I think of putting to sea, even if the sixth man cannot be secured. The time is here, and the earlier we sail, the longer our season will be.

Every day we gain now is a hunting day."

"Agreed, Captain Bertram!" replied Herr Bunkendorf. "Particularly as the sixth man has already been found. Look at him, captain! There he is."

Captain Bertram approached Leo, and with his clear bright eyes scrutinized his face. "Only a little bit too young, but still sufficiently stout and vigorous," he said. "Have you ever served on ship, my lad ?"

"Up to this time, no; although the desire to do so has not been wanting," replied Leo. "But I couldn't leave home because I had to take care of my mother."

"Why do you wish to go now?"

"Because my brother Willy is large enough to take my place. And besides I can return within a year."

"It will not take us that long," said the captain. "Well, if you want to go, it can soon be arranged. Can you go along with me at once?"

"No, sir, that I cannot, for I must first take leave of my mother," replied Leo. "But the ship must sail past our house, and I can *step on* her there."

"Get on board, my lad!" said the captain, laughing. "Where is your house?"

Leo described its location accurately.

"Well, get yourself in sailing trim by this time to-morrow. Have you an outfit ready for the expedition?"

Leo was obliged to acknowledge, with blushes on his face, that he had nothing else to take along except some under-clothing.

"And you would sail to the North pole in this linen jacket?" exclaimed Captain Bertram. "Listen, my lad, this is all nonsense. You had much better stay at home and sit snugly behind the stove in winter. It is impossible for you to go along as you are now dressed. You would freeze to death in the very first night-watch on deck."

Leo became white and red alternately from anxiety, and he could barely keep from tears. It was really a fortunate circumstance that Liborius had gone with him to Herr Bunkendorf's. He looked imploringly at the lawyer, who nodded

pleasantly in reply.

"Captain Bertram," the latter said, "Will you be so good as to give me a list of the outfit for a whale-fisher, which Leo will require? The purchase can be made without delay, and all the articles put on board the Dolphin in a few hours. If we can't pay for them now, we can do so when the Dolphin returns and Leo draws his wages. Until then I shall be responsible for them; and so this last obstacle will be removed."

"Agreed!" said Captain Bertram. "But you seem to take great interest in the

youth, Herr Liborius."

"Certainly, and I have my reasons, which I shall communicate by and by, friend captain. But now we have no time for chatting. Leo, start off, make your mother easy about Elshöft's claimsand, captain, you and I will buy the articles for the lad's outfit."

"Agreed!" cried the Captain—"Nota bene, if my employer has no further commands for me!"

Leo thanked Herr Bunkendorf, who replied with the remark that "we must assist as far as possible in a good cause," and he then left the place of business of the rich merchant, in company with Herr Liborius and the captain. When they were outside the door, Liborius shook his hand affectionately, but the captain looked at him thoughtfully, and shook his head.

"Listen to me, my lad," he said. "I couldn't say anything when we were with the Governor, because I saw that he wanted you to go on this whaling-voyage. But see here, since you know nothing about affairs at sea, and a whaling-voyage ain't a rabbit hunt, let me advise you to make the experiment of sea-faring on some other vessel. You can't go with us safely, my lad, and it would grieve me if you were to sink under the hardships of the voyage. Stay behind, my lad, stay at home."

"I cannot; I dare not; I must go;" replied Leo. "I am accustomed to the water, and fishing on the open sea is no child's play. No, no, Captain, you can't dissuade me from my design."

"Well," said Captain Bertram, a little gruffly. "But you will regret that you didn't follow my advice! Come, Libo-

rins!"

He turned his back upon the perplexed lad. Liborius, however, whispered in the latter's ear: "Go quietly home, Leo! When you get on board in the morning, the old sea-bear will not growl at you any more. Greet your mother for me, my lad!"

Leo shook the lawyer's hand cordially and thankfully, and hastened away. Liborius then told the captain the motives that induced Leo to take service in a whaling expedition, and this story changed the captain's sentiments.

"But what a brave fellow the lad is!" he exclaimed. "And here I have been looking upon him as a light-headed rake,

who was leaving home, like many young fellows who try such a voyage, simply to escape the supervision of his parents. Now I look upon the subject with other eyes, friend Liborius, and it is certain that the lad shall soon see that he has found a friend in me. What is the name of that villain who treated the poor lad's mother so shamefully?"

"Elshöft, Captain. I presume you must know him."

"No, I do not know him, but I shall recollect the name in case I ever meet the scoundrel. He is called Elshöft? Well, I shall not forget the name. But we are at the place, friend Liborius, where we can purchase the brave boy's outfit."

They entered a shop, and secured the different articles. When Liborius had completed his purchases, Captain Bertram selected an elegant fur coat, paid cash for it and laid it with the other article.

"I will give him that," he said, "and I don't consider it a superfluous article.

The lad is brave, and deserves that care should be taken of him."

Liborius was as proud of the fur coat, as though he had presented it himself. He pressed the Captain's hand warmly, and said: "May God reward you, Captain Bertram! Here is another proof that all the good men under the blue canopy of heaven are not extinct. How the lad will rejoice when he learns that his brave spirit and his faithful piety in his filial love for his poor mother are esteemed at their full value! There is no good deed, Captain, that don't bear its good fruit."

"And no bad deed that isn't punished, sooner or later by the Omniscient Judge on high," replied Captain Bertram, earnestly. "Wait, Liborius,—even that Elshöft will not escape his Judge, although our earthly judges fail to punish him. And now, God bless you, my friend! Send the articles on board to-day, for we will weigh anchor early in the morning."

"A happy voyage, Captain!" replied

the Lawyer, shaking the brave sailor's hand. "May Heaven conduct you, and bring you back again safely and prosperously."

The two men separated and went in different directions, and many a month passed away before they met face to face again.





CHAPTER III.

LEAVING HOME.

Liborius were getting Leo's outfit ready, he hastened with light heart to the bank of the river, loosed the boat from the stake to which it had been tied, seized the oars and plied them briskly. Although his course was with the current, and Leo was no laggard, but cleft the water with rapid and uniform strokes of his oars, night closed around him before he reached the house.

On the way, while his boat was gliding lightly over the green waves, he considered long and anxiously whether he should communicate frankly everything that had occurred to his mother, or leave secretly,

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communicating his intentions only to Willy. He inclined at first to the former plan; but when he reflected how unspeakably severe his departure would be to his affectionate mother—when he thought of the tears she would shed, the entreaties she would make to induce him to alter his plans, and to keep him from leaving her and exposing his life to the boisterous ocean and the severe cold of the North, his resolution failed him, and he resolved to keep all secret from her. He could not-he dare not remain at home any longer. He must go for the sake of that mother, who had so bitterly grieved at the prospect of losing her little house, and, moreover, he had given his solemn promise that he would join the ship, and that could not be broken for any light reason.

Now, for the first time, he asked himself the question, whether he had been right in entering upon the business before his mother's consent was secured. But the consciousness of his good intentions comforted him in that regard, and, moreover, his mother had never objected to the execution of any plans hitherto proposed by him. He had been accustomed, for many years, to act for himself. His mother was always satisfied with whatever he did; and hence he had no doubt but that she would approve of his present resolution when the bitter anguish of separation had been overcome.

His absence would probably not be a very long one. The ship might return before Christmas, and then the result of his labors would richly compensate both him and his mother, for the anguish of separation. Leo was in no sense regretting his resolution, and the nearer he came to his home, the more determined was he to let his mother know, only after his departure, through Willy, of the step that he had taken from love for her.

When he entered the room, his mother and Willy were sitting by the table, on which was a lighted lamp, mending their nets. It was a lovely picture of quiet home life on which Leo's eye rested, and sadness filled his heart as he said to himself:

"This is the last evening, for a long, long time, that you dare spend by her side." A feeling of intense anger towards the individual, whose unbounded greediness was driving him away from the little family circle out into the world, and perhaps to death, was aroused in his breast. The anger, however, speedily disappeared, and his heart beat more rapidly with a species of noble pride, proceeding from the consciousness that he was always ready to make, with joy, the greatest sacrifice for the peace and comfort of his mother.

This consciousness gave him strength to approach the family circle with a bright face. To his mother, who looked anxiously and timidly at him, he gave this consolation:

"Don't trouble yourself; my efforts to circumvert the wicked plans of our persecutor have been successful." He pressed his brother Willy's hand, and sat down between him and his mother; then he told them how well he had sold his fish, and that good Liborius, the lawyer, had promised so to manage the mother's case, that she would certainly suffer no loss. Leo, however, said nothing about himself, and concealed the fact that he was about to undertake a long and perilous journey, the very next morning.

The pain of the approaching separation frequently oppressed him, and he became immersed in quiet thought and meditation, from which an abrupt remark of Willy, or a sympathetic question of his mother, would arouse him. Then he would speak quickly, laugh, joke, and make all kinds of fun, to conceal the bleeding wounds of his heart. But the quick eye of an affectionate mother cannot be so easily deceived. She remarked Leo's unusual manner, and her eye often rested anxiously and inquiringly upon his face. Nevertheless she said nothing, and thought it would be better to inquire

about it in the morning, when they could be alone. Perhaps he did not wish to tell Willy what was oppressing his spirit, and that *something* was oppressing him she had no doubt.

At length the hour for retiring had arrived. The cuckoo on the large, regularly ticking house-clock proclaimed, in a loud voice, ten o'clock. Their usual family worship was held, and then the mother arose. Leo also arose quickly, stepped rapidly towards her, kissed her affectionately, and with a tender voice said: "Bless me, dearest mother!"

"What troubles you, Leo?" asked the mother, with like tenderness, pressing her son closely to her heart. "Leo, you are certainly keeping something from me which has given you sorrow."

"Yes, mother," replied Leo—"Sorrow, and joy also. You will know all by this time to-morrow, and then will you pardon me for what I have done?"

"Is it anything wicked, my son?" inquired the mother, anxiously.

"No, nothing wicked; still it will give you, as well as myself, sorrow," said Leo. "Whatever may come from it, mother dear, my intentions are good, and can be justified in the sight of the Lord!"

"Well, then, my boy, I bless you; and may the Lord bless you also," said the mother, tenderly, laying her hand upon the curly head of her son. "God judges not our actions, so much as the spirit that prompts them. Whatever you may have done, I pardon, if it was done with good intent. And now sleep sweetly and soundly, my good Leo! In the morning you will tell me all—won't you?"

"Yes, mother, everything will be made known to you in the morning," replied Leo, ambiguously. Then he pressed his mother once more to his breast and rested his head upon her shoulders to conceal the tears that were darkening his eyes. At length he tore himself away, whispering: "Good night, good night, dearest mother!" and hurried away to his room.

Here the tears, which he had been

obliged to restrain, in order to keep himself from revealing all, flowed without restraint. But he smiled amid his tears, for his mother had blessed him, and forgiven what he had done and was about to do. The severest trial—the parting from his mother—was over. And it had taken place when his mother had been pressed to his beating heart.

At sunrise in the morning, while his mother was still softly slumbering, he resolved, as was his custom, to row, with his brother, out to fish in the sea; and he would there await the Dolphin, so that he could get aboard her from his boat. He would detail his plan to Willy while they were waiting for the whaler, and charge him to make a full report to his mother, and to beg her to forgive him once more, for the step he had been forced to take, in order to protect her from the persecutions of the wicked Elshöft.

Before he laid down on his plain bed, he fell upon his knees, implored the assistance of God, begged that He would, for Christ's sake, protect his mother, and grant His blessing to them all. Then he asked the Lord to forgive him, if he had done wrong in undertaking the proposed voyage, and to protect him throughout its dangers and trials, for the sake of Jesus Christ, whose love for mankind had led Him to suffer and die upon the cross. After this he laid down and soon fell asleep. His conscience was at rest, and he looked with pleasure into the dark future, trusting firmly that the Almighty Father, who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men, would not look down upon him with displeasure.

Leo arose from his bed, before the dazzling rays of the sun were quivering above the surface of the sea, and awoke his brother, who slept in the next room. Willy sprang up immediately, and was in his brother's room in a few minutes.

"Brother," said Leo, "let us haste to go out upon the sea. Please go down to the beach at once. I will soon join you."

Willy started immediately, though he

wondered why his brother had not made the necessary arrangements in the evening, as had been his custom. Leo, with a rapid pen, wrote a few words upon a sheet of paper,—his last farewell to his mother,—folded it up and put it in his belt, so that he might give it to Willy for his mother on his return home. Then he left the room. But his swift feet tarried by the chamber, where his mother was sleeping, probably dreaming pleasant dreams, and free from the thought that she would not see her son again for a long, long time.

He placed his ear against the door to listen. His mother was breathing tranquilly. Leo's heart began to throb, and he wanted to open the door gently, to creep upon tip-toes to her bed, so that he might for the last time stamp her picture upon his inmost soul. Already he had seized the latch and lifted it, with the view of carrying out his thought. But no! If his mother should awake and inquire what brought him there at that un-

usual hour—should his last words to her be—untruthful? No, no, that must not be.

His remembrance of home must never be marred by the thought of such a sin, he must be able to think of it with a happy guileless heart! He knelt down at the door, and once more implored the blessing of our heavenly Father upon his beloved mother. Then he kissed the sill which her feet had so often trod, and whispered:

"Farewell, farewell, my dearest, best mother!" He arose composed, wiped his eyes and crept out of the house with noiseless steps. He stopped, however, once more to pray at the grave of his father. Then he walked boldly towards the sea, over which the Sun threw its golden beams, and with quick steps hurried to the beach. Willy was ready to push off from the shore. Leo sprang silently into the boat, and turned its head towards the open sea.

"Brother, shan't we cast our nets in

here?" said Willy, after a long silence.
"It is an excellent place for fish, as we discovered day before yesterday."

"No, Willy, I don't intend to fish today," said Leo, plying the oars briskly.

His brother looked at him in astonishment, shook his head, but without further remark plied his oars with like briskness, and the boat moved still further on towards the open ocean. Suddenly he threw his oars in the boat, and said: "Willy, I have changed my mind. Yes, let my last work at home be devoted to care for our good mother."

"But why do you speak so strangely, this morning?" said Willy. "There must be some queer things running through your brain, brother."

"You shall hear all, and know all, Willy," replied Leo. "Let us only first finish our work."

Willy was a quiet, gentle soul. Without asking his brother a question, he went boldly to work and threw out the nets. In a few hours their work was done. Leo

then suffered the boat to rock upon the waves, supported his head upon his hands, looked thoughtfully before him, and said suddenly: "Isn't it true, Willy, that you love mother no less than I do?"

"You may well believe that," replied

Willy.

"And if I were not here, you would not leave her, but would take care of her, as you have heretofore done in company with me?"

"I would be doubly diligent, brother, so as to make up for your absence," answered Willy, frankly. "But are you going to leave us, brother?"

"I must, I MUST," said Leo, with emphasis, in order to check any opposition from his brother. "Listen to me, Willy, and you yourself will see that I must go."

Willy now threw down his oars also, and left the boat float at pleasure, paying attention to nothing but his brother's words. Leo repeated simply and plainly what his mother had told him in the arbor, and then made known the plan he

had determined upon in order to counteract Elshöft's base designs.

"And now decide, brother, whether I have done right," he said, as he finished his statement. "Your heart will tell you whether you dare blame me, or not."

Willy looked at his brother with his bright eyes, and said, without hesitation, but with an expression of firm conviction: "You have acted well, nobly, brother, and I praise you for it. If you were not older than I am, I would go in your place, but I see in this case you have the better right. God protect you, and bless you, brother! His blessing will not be wanting to you. Even if I am not as strong and skillful as you are, it will not matter, for I shall be doubly more industrious than heretofore."

"But what will mother say, Willy, at my leaving without bidding her good bye?"

"She will weep, Leo; yes, she will shed many a tear, but you will not fail to have her blessing," answered Willy. "Re-

ly upon it, that I will comfort her as well as I can. When the first outburst of anguish shall be over, her love for you will be increased. You have done well, Leo, and I bless you for your happy idea. I am comforted, brother, with the thought that I may be of some use after you have left us."

"Yes, indeed, Willy, if there be any merit in doing what I propose, the large portion will be yours, for without your assistance I could certainly do nothing," replied Leo. "Now, however, I leave with a lighter heart, since I know that you approve of my undertaking and will second it with the work of your hands. But, Willy, what depresses me now is my not knowing whether mother will give me her blessing upon the voyage. My soul will lose all courage, all cheerfulness, all energy, if I shall be compelled to think that my departure has been the cause of sadness rather than joy."

Willy shook his head, and looked thoughtfully towards the house, that now

shone in the distance, like a polished shield on the sea. "Brother," he said suddenly, "but if you could know—be quite certain that mother gave you her blessing upon the voyage?"

"Willy, that would be a great comfort, a source of great happiness to me," answered Leo. "Then I would fear no peril, but rest confidently in the thought that a Christian mother's blessings and faithful prayers would protect me in all dangers."

"Well then, brother," said Willy, "I feel in my heart that mother will bless you, for you are only doing your duty to her as a good son. But, see here, Leo, you shall be convinced that I am not mistaken."

"How is that possible, brother?" asked Leo.

"It can be done very easily, and I am glad that it occurred to me when I looked over at the house," answered Willy. "As soon as you get on board of the Dolphin, I will row home and tell mother

everything. If she is satisfied, as I am certain she will be, then I will take a large white cloth and fasten it to an oar on the top of the house. Such a signal will be visible for many a mile out at sea, and when you see it waving, you may rest assured that it conveys to you a thousand greetings and blessings from mother."

"That's an excellent idea!" cried Leo, flushed with joy. "And you will not, from kindness of heart, Willy, deceive me?"

"No, I would shrink from such a sin," said Willy, honestly. "Let us, however, row nearer the shore, so that I can reach the house as quick as possible after you have got on board of the Dolphin. The sooner the signal waves, the better you will like it."

"Certainly, my darling brother!" cried Leo, seizing the oars, so as to bring the boat quickly close to the shore. "And, Willy, when you speak to mother, give her this note, in which I have written my last farewell. Don't forget it, Willy, I beg you."

Willy put the note in his pocket, and promised to attend to his brother's request scrupulously. Then the two lads talked about those things which were dearest to their hearts, the speedy return of Leo, the perils to which he would be exposed, their joy when he would return; of their mother, and all the things Willy should do during his brother's absence, in order to make it be felt as little as possible. Leo impressed it upon his mind that he should apply, without hesitation, to Herr Liborius, in case Elshöft made any fresh attempts at persecuting their mother. With such conversation, they gradually neared the beach, at a point which the Dolphin would be compelled to pass. The hour of noon had gone by, and the vessel might come any minute.

An hour more passed away, when a white sail appeared flying in the distance, following the curvatures of the river, approaching nearer and nearer, then disapproaching nearer and nearer and

pearing behind the jutting tree-covered promontory, then emerging above the green leaves, until at length the hull came into view, and the vessel was seen moving majestically towards them over the surface of the water.

"The time is come!" said Leo, in a half-choking voice, tremulous with the anguish of the separation. "Let us pull nearer, brother."

They grasped their oars, and in a few minutes thereafter the boat lay by the side of the whaling vessel. The brothers fell into each other's arms. "Farewell! God preserve you!" said both. "Kiss mother for me," added Leo, in a tremulous voice, and then tore himself from his brother, after a quick, warm grasp of his hand. A few minutes afterwards he stood on the deck of the Dolphin, leaning over the rail, and waved his last greeting to the boat.

Willy shook the tears from his eyes, headed his boat to the shore, and rowed with all his might. On the beach, he turned around for an instant. The Dolphin was flying over the smooth surface of the water with full sails. Willy waved his handkerchief in the air, murmuring: "God's blessing be with you, brother!" and then hastened with light, quick steps, but with a sad, anxious heart, to his mother's house.





CHAPTER IV.

MARTIN THE PILOT.

God you will see them all again in a few months. Or, do you regret the rash step you have taken? There is still time to turn back."

"Oh no, I do not regret anything!" replied Leo. "I am convinced that I have done right, and hence there is no room for regret or turning back, Captain."

"Well, then I bid you welcome again, and hope that you will do your duty

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honestly so long as we are together. Follow me now to Martin, the pilot. See here, I have promised myself that you will be a first-rate whale-fisher, and I can't put you under a better teacher than old Martin. He is rough and crusty, but no braver sailor ever trod the planks of a vessel. Come, my lad!"

The Captain walked to the stern, and Leo followed him. A thick-set, broadshouldered person, every inch a sailor, was at the wheel. Indeed he looked rough enough; he had on a coarse, waterproof jacket, and a low-crowned felt hat shaded his broad but true and honest face, from which sparkling, bright, gray eyes shone forth. His cheeks and forehead were as brown as mahogany, the effects of the weather, to which Martin had been exposed for years. The tropical sun and the cutting cold of the polar region had alike left their marks upon his face: deep furrows told of trials and exposures, of which Leo, at this time, could form no conception. When the Captain, with his

young protegè, approached Martin, he turned his piercing eyes to Leo, and, laughing good-naturedly, extended his rough, huge hand.

"Well, lad," said he in his deep bass voice, "so you want to be a sailor like your father? See here, I knew your father well, and made many a voyage with him. For the love I bore him, and because the Captain has already told me some good things about you, I intend to take charge of you. But understand me, my lad, I don't want to make an idle vagabond of you! If you come under my authority, you will have twice as much to do as the others, and I don't think I can promise you any indulgence if you don't perform your duty faithfully. So reflect upon what you are going to do.

"With me you will have nothing but trouble and work, and you must be ready, night and day, to execute orders. But if you are one of a larger party, there are many hours which you can idle away, because a watchful eye will not be upon

you all the while. If you want to become an honest, skillful sailor—that's another question. You might possibly become one in that way, although it's not very probable. Now, you have your choice."

Leo didn't hesitate a second. He seized the pilot's hand and, looking full into his weather-beaten face, said quickly and boldly: "I will stick to you, Martin, that I will. And if I don't perform my duty as far as possible, or if I become idle and neglectful of my work, you shall cast me off, without a murmur from me."

"Well said, lad!" said the pilot, squeezing his hand as if it were in a vice. "If you are only half as apt as you seem to be, we shall be good friends."

"That I expect, Martin, that I confidently expect," said Captain Bertram. "He is still young, but he is made of good metal, within and without. Forge it aright, Martin; and you, Leo, bring no disgrace to your teacher. Peace, peace, my lad, I can imagine what you are going

to say, and I believe you. Don't be too much afraid of old Martin—if you only have the will and be ready for your work, you will soon win his good favor."

The Captain nodded kindly to his young protege and walked away. Leo remained standing by the Pilot's side, looked around him, and was soon immersed in deep thought, while Martin troubled himself but little, or rather not at all, about him. Soon Leo directed his eyes to the shore, which seemed to recede more and more in the distance. His eyes sought out, and soon found, his mother's house, shining like a white shield over the sea.

Ah the mother! It was likely that she knew everything now, and was extending her arms anxiously towards her son, who was being carried further and further away from her. Her eyes, darkened with tears, were seeking him in vain, her voice could no longer reach his ear, and Leo almost regretted that he had left without a farewell, that he had not spoken freely

to his mother and left the decision of the whole matter to her.

He looked out for the white flag that his brother Willy was to raise on the roof of the house, but his eyes found nothing, and his heart was becoming heavier and more oppressed. How, if she did not forgive him, if she disapproved of the bold and rash step he had taken, although done only to relieve her from sorrow and pain? If, instead of sending her blessing after him on his distant, perilous journey, she should be offended at him and forbid his brother to raise the flag?

Leo's eyes were immovably directed towards the white house, which was now a great distance off. "Oh mother" he sighed—"I have left you only that I may silence the persecutions of a merciless man. Forgive the act, to which my heart impelled me, and which I considered a dear and sacred duty."

He looked again, and gazed until his eyes were filled with tears,—and then he prayed silently to God that He would yet so turn his mother's heart that the burden of sorrow might be removed from his own, which was now trembling and shaking in the anguish and care of hope, expectation and bitter uncertainty.

The vessel with its full sails flew over the shining surface of the water, like a bird whose wings cut the air with the swiftness of the wind. The land receded further and further, the beach had disappeared from Leo's sight, and the house could be only seen as a white point above the green waves. Before long this would also disappear and with it—as Leo feared—all peace and joy from his soul.

"Lad, why are you standing there, looking all the while back upon the land?" asked the pilot, laying his hand heavily upon Leo's shoulders. "That's a miserable voyage when the body only is on board, while the spirit stays behind in the old home. Look ahead, ahead, my lad! Whatever a man undertakes, he should undertake with body and soul, like a whole man, otherwise all his acts and

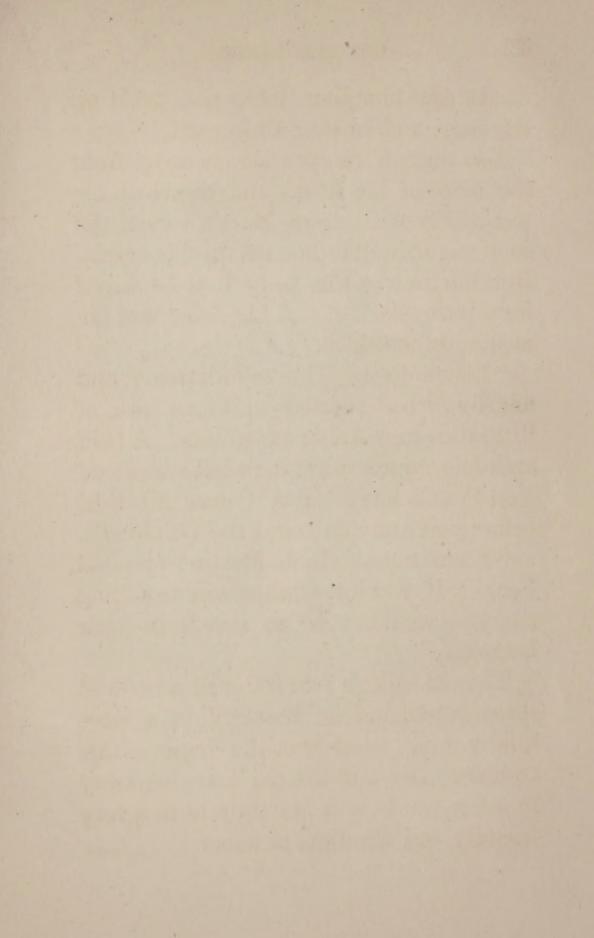
deeds are bungling jobs, not profiting anybody, and least of all himself."

Leo turned his eyes slowly away from the place of his home and clenched his teeth to conceal, from Martin's eyes, the deep anguish that burned in his breast. But Martin saw the tears that he wiped from his eyelashes, and his brow was immediately wrinkled.

"Listen to me," he said, harshly and angrily, "soft-hearted milksops are of little use on an Arctic expedition. A bold and determined spirit is 'what's wanted.' You should have thought over all this, before you came on board the Dolphin."

"I am not a child, Martin!" replied Leo. "If you knew what was troubling me, you wouldn't be so severe in your language."

The old sailor's face softened a little at these words, and he inquired, in a more kindly tone, what was the cause of his trouble. Leo told the old man his story in a few words, and Martin said in a very friendly and affectionate tone:





LEO TAKES A LAST LOOK.

"Leo put the glass to his eye and again sought all that he loved most dearly in the world." p. 73.

"That's something else, my lad! It is true that everything depends upon God's blessing,—but he who lacks his mother's blessing, lacks ever so much. I don't wonder that your heart is heavy. Well, well, lad, don't take it too much to heart. We shall keep your house in sight for an hour or so yet. Go forward and bring me my spy glass—it may be that we shall need it."

Leo sprang off quickly, asked one of the boys to show him the pilot's cabin, and returned with the glass.

"So, lad," said Martin, "that's right. Take the glass and look carefully. Let us not give up hope. A mother's heart is a royal treasury full of the best feelings, and I don't think you will hope in vain for a full share of her blessing. There, now you have it right, lad—and when you discover anything tell me, for I shall be as glad as you."

Leo put the glass to his eye, and again sought the little house, which contained all that he loved most dearly in the world.

There it lay plainly before him with its silver white walls and its grape vines encasing the windows with their rich green. In spite of the distance he could see everything distinctly,—even the tiles on the roof. Soon it seemed as though he saw his mother, at the window, in the black dress which she had worn since his father's death. No: it must be nothing but the shadow of a tree falling against the bright, shining panes.

His heart beat still more rapidly, and he sent a thousand greetings to the shadow. But the white flag—where was it? Oh it was not to be seen, and the vessel was sailing further and further away,—and the time allowed to Leo's anxious and uncertain hope, was getting shorter and shorter. In a short half hour the house would disappear below the horizon, and bitter sorrow would take up its abode in his heart, to fasten itself there for so long a time!

Already, although a feeble hope still remained, he felt the gnawings of the

worm called remorse; his cheeks became pale, his hands trembled, and he groaned in anguish: "Oh Willy, that you hadn't thought of giving me a sign! Then there would have been at least a doubt. I should have found consolation in that, and in the conviction that I was doing right in the eyes of the Lord. But now, now nothing is left but the sad, crushing certainty that my mother's anger rests upon my heart."

"There is nothing, Martin," said Leo sorrowfully to the pilot, and he shut up the glass with a trembling hand. "The house has disappeared behind the waves, and with it all my hopes."

The voice of the youth broke down at these words, and he turned quickly away. But old Martin took the glass, put it to his eye, and laughed quietly but heartily to himself.

"Yes, the landlubbers, the landlubbers!" he muttered. "They have no eyes upon the water, until they have made a couple of voyages upon it. Now,

Leo," and he turned towards him, "the white flag is floating very gaily over there."

"Impossible, impossible, Martin!" cried the youth in a tone of despair, although he seized the glass quickly and changed color. "Ha! but I didn't see a trace of it before."

"You didn't open your eyes wide enough, young clodhopper!" replied Martin, laughing very pleasantly. "There it floats and flutters, like an Admiral's flag, large and wide in the air. Compose yourself, compose yourself, my lad! If your hand trembles so, you won't be able to see anything with the glass."

Indeed Leo was trembling like an aspen leaf, and his ruddy cheeks became as white as a sheet. But regaining his self-command, he laid the spy glass upon the rail in order to hold it more firmly, and then looked away in the distance. A low cry of joy escaped from his lips. "It floats, Martin,—it floats and flutters. Oh mother, dear, you forgive me and your

blessing follows me! I thank Thee, Oh Lord, that Thou hast not suffered her heart to be closed against her son!"

Old Martin rubbed his hands together in great joy, and looked with heartfelt sympathy at his young pupil, whose eye and spy-glass were kept fixed upon the floating white sheet.

"Yes, yes," he muttered to himself, "man's feelings are always the same, and they are the same now they were thousands of years ago. It was just so with myself, thirty years ago, when at fourteen years of age I saw my home disappear behind the waves. I thought my heart would, nay, must break. But—it didn't break, and it soon got sound again when I began to be busily employed. Work, work—that is the best consolation and restorative for all infirmities of the heart and weaknesses of the spirit.

"But, don't you see it any more, my lad?" he turned to Leo, who had taken the glass from his eye and come near the wheel. "Yes, yes, we are about over the

line. But if you want, you can go up to the mast-head—there you may still snatch a glimpse of the white rag which pleases you so much, and has made your heart so

glad.

"Only go," he went on to say, "I have no objection; at present I have nothing for you to do, and—well, yes, the heart of a young fellow who has left his home and his mother for the first time has its rights also! Quick, lad—no one will disturb you at the mast-head, and you can have a good talk with yourself up there."

Leo accepted, without hesitation, the invitation of his fatherly friend—indeed he began to look upon Martin as such—and in a minute was at the mast-head, whence, with the glass held against the mast, he looked over the waves for a long time, until his hand, the sky and the sea met together in one line, and the eye could see nothing but the boundless expanse of the water, the blue of the sky, and occasionally a bird flying, with out-

stretched wings, over the moving mirror of the sea.

He then folded his hands, and looked upwards for a few minutes in silent thought, perhaps also in silent prayer. Then he passed his hand over his face, stood up erect, and whispered:

"Enough! Henceforward I devote myself to my work, and will only think of home, mother and brother, when the hour for rest arrives. Brave old Martin, you may be as rough as a bear in the Arctic ocean, but that's all outside. My standing here is a plain proof of your good, noble heart. You shall never have reason to complain of me."

He cast one more look—the last—upon the land where his mother and brother were thinking of him. Then he shut up the glass quickly, climbed nimbly down the mast, and a few seconds later stood, with bright eyes and happy face, alongside of old Martin, who greeted him with a hearty grasp of the hand.



CHAPTER V.

THE EAVESDROPPER.

HE wind was favorable, blowing from the south-west. The Dolphin, in its course, cut the waves rapidly, and seemed as though it were anxious to contend in speed with its namesakes, which were playing sportively about the keel of the good ship.

Captain Bertram was of the opinion that, under existing circumstances, there would be nothing lost on account of the lateness of the date of their sailing, and that, if the wind would only continue so brisk and favorable, it would be surprising if they didn't steer homewards, with full lading, in a few months.

Old Martin was always in a good humor, and even the crew had happy faces. Leo was spry and active, and Martin had not deceived himself when he expressed the belief that occupation and work would soon frighten the shadow of sadness away from the soul of his young friend.

Martin and Captain Bertram, before long, were not the only persons on board who gave Leo their good will. The handsome, lively, and always friendly young lad acquired many friends among the crew. And there were but few of the sailors that looked upon him with unfavorable or distrustful eyes, or that grudged him the favor of their offices.

Leo did not return like for like, with the latter class. He was pleasant, kind and friendly to every one, and the fatherly affection that Martin continued to show him daily, did not keep him from being zealous and attentive to his duties. On the contrary, it made him anxious to deserve this affection, by redoubled diligence.

It happened one night that Martin and Leo had the watch on deck accidentally at the same hour. The night was clear and calm. The moon shone brightly in the sky, lighting up the waves of the sea with its silver rays. The Dolphin sped along with a regular, easy and yet swift motion, cutting through the water like a bird through the air. The rushing waves broke against its forequarter, and splashed sportively against its sides. The air, in spite of the high latitude attained by the Dolphin, was mild and refreshing, and no danger was to be feared on any side.

Martin sat at the wheel, casting his eyes carefully around. When he saw that there wasn't the slightest appearance of danger, he called Leo, who was leaning over the rail on the forward part of the deck, seemingly watching the waves flashing in the moonlight, and made room for him to sit at his side.

"Sit down here a little, my lad," he said kindly. "The night is clear, the moon shines brightly, and the ship sails splendidly. They are keeping good watch forward, and it's a right pretty night to spin a long yarn. Tell me now in full, my lad, what induced you to join the Dolphin. I have heard this and that from the Captain, but altogether it is but little that I have learned to know about you."

Leo was ready to tell at once, in detail, what he knew about himself and his family, to the kind pilot; for the conduct of his parents, as well as his own, had always been upright, and there was no necessity for concealment. While he was speaking, one of the sailors, who was on the forward watch, approached near enough to hear almost every word which Martin and Leo exchanged, and seated himself upon a block, as though tired of his long watch, and desirous of taking a little rest.

In order to avoid the appearance of eavesdropping, he turned his face towards

the sea, and rested his head upon his hands, to keep himself from being recognized. Martin and Leo paid no attention to him, inasmuch as they were wholly indifferent whether a third party heard the story or not. He had no secrets that he cared to conceal from a faithful heart and a listening ear. What he said the whole world might hear, because it was only the truth.

Under such circumstances, Leo quietly and without embarrassment narrated his story. Martin listened without interruption until Leo stated that his father's partner had declared that the vessel, which had been swallowed up by the waves, had not been insured at the joint expense of Captain Rembrandt and himself, but by himself alone; on which account Rembrandt's widow—Leo's mother—could not claim a cent of the insurance money. Here old Martin sprang up, and said:

"See here, lad, that is the most infamous fraud that old Elshöft has ever

I know it perfectly well, for I am acquainted with the whole story, because I came near taking command of the Uranus, the name of the lost vessel, in place of your father. As I told you before, I was well acquainted with him, and when he was sick he asked me to take his place until he should recover. I could not accept it, because I had promised to go as pilot in a vessel to the East Indies.

"It was then that your Father told me, in the presence of that rascal Elshöft, that the responsibility would not be very great, as the ship and its freight had been insured by him and his partner, which statement the latter then and there confirmed. It is clear enough that the old rascal has swindled your mother! Infamous! Infamous! to steal from a poor widow and her two helpless children their entire property!"

"But, Martin, if that had been all, the misfortune could have been still endured," said Leo. "But he didn't cease to per-

secute my mother, and to extort still more money from her, and this is really the circumstance that induced me to take a place on the vessel."

"But how could the rascal do that?" asked old Martin, taking his seat slowly again.

Leo related what we all know, and Martin, ordinarily a quiet, circumspect person, suffered himself to be so much overcome by his anger, that he uttered a shocking oath at the wicked swindler.

"God forgive me the sin!" he added immediately after, "but if this doesn't tease all the patience out of a man, he must have it twisted as thick as a cable. And so in fact, after he had so shamefully swindled your mother, he wished to drive her away from her last place of refuge? Now lad, see here! It is very praise-worthy in you, to have sacrificed yourself so willingly for your mother, but it shall also be to your profit, and, if the good Lord will permit me to return to Bremen, your noble act will find its reward.

"Lad, the rascal shall be made to hand over his spoils, as sure as my name is Martin, and as I am an honest man. We will see whether he dare deny before me, what your father told me in his presence. That we shall see, Leo; and after that—for he won't dare to hoist a false flag against my honest name; after that, I say, he will be obliged to surrender the spoils, which he supposes are so secure, and to pay your mother the whole, even to the last cent.

"Patience, only patience, Leo! God conducted you to the Dolphin, in order to bring the truth to the light of day, and you will not have made a trip to the Arctic ocean in vain. Be comforted, my lad—we will drag the shark on the beach and force him to disgorge his plunder there, although years have passed away since he swallowed it."

"Useless, my good Martin, absolutely useless," replied Leo. "The fraud has been so cunningly managed that we shall not be able to expose it. Herr Liborius

did his very best, to protect mother's just claims, as he knew, and, like every body else, was thoroughly convinced that they were just—but it was all useless. The law decided in favor of the swindler, and he laughed in his sleeve at us. His papers and certificates were too carefully prepared,—even if they were founded on pure fraud."

"We will see, we will see, Leo," replied old Martin, more calmly than before. "The right is on your mother's side, and on whatever side the right is, on that side the Lord will be. On this account it would be marvelous if rascality could be successful in the long run. Let us see whether the word of an honest, upright sailor won't be worth more in Court than a shabby piece of filthy paper, on which any scamp can write what he pleases.

"Yes, yes," he continued, "crimes may remain concealed for years, so that at times we almost doubt whether God's eye rests upon the wicked and their wickedness, but then suddenly everything is exposed, and the faint-hearted and those of little faith, blush on account of their groundless fears. Patience, Leo! the Lord will bring all that is evil to the light of day, even if it were buried in the very centre of the earth!"

Leo shook his head in doubt. He could not directly contradict the old man, because he felt that God had blessed him in permitting him to join the Dolphin's crew, as he was thus enabled in any case to protect his mother from the worst. While Martin was saying what we have just related, and the two were engaged in earnest conversation, the sailor, who had heard every word, got up quietly and paced the forward deck, without attracting the attention of either Martin or his young friend. After a little he walked forward, touched the sailor on the shoulder, who was keeping watch there, and said in a low tone of voice, as the latter turned around: "See Jacob, I think you have been sitting here quite long enough. Give

me your place and walk about a little to keep yourself awake."

"Very well, Conrad!" replied the other, getting up from the pile of cordage on which he had made himself a comfortable seat. Conrad took his place, and Jacob, after pacing the deck for a few minutes, sat down on the same block which had been occupied by his mate, when he heard the conversation of Martin and Leo. Conrad, observing the movements of his companion, nodded his head, and said in a low tone of voice to himself:

"That's good! I shall now take care that I escape disgrace and be not discovered. They may say what they please; my father may be a miser, but he is certainly not a rascal. Still it was a stupid thing in him not to leave the widow in peace. For the sake of a few hundred dollars, the old story will be stirred up again! What a greedy miser he is!"

He crossed his arms on his breast and, leaning back as though resting himself, gazed on the sea. But his soul did not appreciate any thing seen by his eyes. It was buried with thoughts and plans which separated him entirely from the external world.

A whole hour was consumed in this manner, and the time was approaching when the men on watch should be relieved. Martin turned abruptly to the sailor, who sat on the block near him, and said:

"See here who are on watch beside us?"

"Ernest Böhme, and Conrad Elshöft."

the man replied.

"Didn't I tell you?" said Martin to Leo, while the sailor, to whom he had spoken, took his seat again. "Be careful before this fellow: if he should find out that we are planning to circumvent his father, he might be inclined to interfere with us slightly."

"But I don't believe that this Conrad Elshöft is the son of the man who cheated my mother," answered Leo. "Old Elshöft is too rich to expose his son to the perils of so dangerous a voyage. He could have fitted out a vessel himself, and made his son the commander."

"Very true! if he wasn't only so mean and miserly," replied old Martin. "I know the old fox well. It may be that he intends to send a vessel on a whaling voyage, as it has become quite the rage lately, because such voyages, when only moderately successful, yield handsome profits. But although miserly, he is still quite far-sighted. He has certainly sent his son along with us, in order to learn the business, without paying for his instruction.

"Should all turn out favorably, he will fit out a vessel next year, and make his son captain or pilot; if unfavorably, he has at least lost nothing, and the lad gets his three hundred dollars pay. Such calculation is as like old Elshöft, as one egg is to another, for there is not to be found in the wide world a more devoted worshiper of filthy lucre than he is. His son is probably no better than the old man."

"But would Captain Bertram have

taken the fellow if he had known that he was the son of the rich Elshöft?" inquired Leo.

"Certainly not if he had known it!" answered Martin. "But the Captain has hardly inquired about his family, and probably doesn't know anything about his father. But what's the use of arguing—let us go to the fellow and ask him about it?"

"That would be of little use in case he has heard our conversation," suggested Leo.

"How could he have heard it? He is sitting forward, near the capstan. But still it is better to go to him, before he has a chance to talk with the fellow on the block, although I don't believe that even this one heard anything. Come, my lad."

Martin arose, went softly up the deck, followed by Leo. Conrad Elshoft remarked their coming, but didn't think it prudent to seem to notice them, or to change his place until Martin cried out: "Holloa, lad, you seem to keep your watch asleep."

Now he sprang up quickly and rubbed his eyes, as though he had been actually overcome with sleep.

"Take care, lad!" the pilot said, sternly. "If I catch you so again, you may get a touch of the ropes' end. What is your name?"

"Conrad Elshöft."

"Where were you born?"

"In Hamburg."

"Hum! Some very good sailors come from that place!" muttered the old pilot. "I hope you are not going to be of the other kind. Keep better watch hereafter, and I will overlook your negligence this time. Keep your eyes open, man! We don't go to sea for sport."

Conrad made no reply, and Martin turned away with Leo.

"You see Martin that I was right," said Leo.

"Hum! yes—and so much the better," replied the pilot. "The whole voyage would be distasteful to me, if the fellow were the child of that crafty old hound.

But the relief must soon come! Go down my lad, and get to your hammock. We have talked enough for the present, I think."

Leo disappeared quickly below decks, and Martin took his place at the wheel again. "Yes, yes! I was too distrustful!" he muttered to himself. "The fellow was asleep, and couldn't have had a lie ready. We have nothing to fear from him. But look out, Elshöft, if the Lord brings us back to Bremen!"

Whilst old Martin thus deceived himself, Conrad Elshöft shook his fist at him, and said in a low, muttering tone: "Take care, you men! you shall neither rob my father of his money, nor his good name, if he is innocent. And he is—he must be! Otherwise—merciful Father! it would be horrible!"

After these words he became silent and absorbed in thought, until the relief appeared on deck and relieved him from his post.



CHAPTER VI.

CONRAD ELSHÖFT.

human heart! Its impulses are like the movements of the slender reed, under the influence of the passing breeze, unless they are controlled by the principles of stern integrity and the spirit of genuine piety!

Conrad Elshöft, although he tried to sleep in his hammock, was kept awake by conflicting thoughts and emotions. He was in no sense animated by those feelings that a son should always have for his father; and yet in his inmost heart he was enraged at hearing his father reviled and condemned without being able to defend him. He believed, or at least hoped that his father was innocent of the crime,

of which he had been accused by Martin and Leo. And yet, he had not the courage to defend his innocence against his accusers, because a gentle voice in his breast whispered, that in the end truth might be on their side. Conrad had no respect for his father, although the voice of nature commanding him to love him, was not completely silenced in his heart.

Heretofore he had been obliged to look upon him as a miser;—must he hereafter believe him to be a swindler—a robber of widows and orphans? But his spirit was stirred up, not altogether on account of his father, for the accusation concerned him also. If his father were found guilty, a part of the disgrace would naturally fall upon him—the son. And whatever faults Conrad had, he was not so devoid of feeling as to be indifferent to honor or dishonor.

In the first ebullition of rage, he gave himself up wholly to gloomy and wicked thoughts. "If I could only prevent the return of Martin and Leo, to Bremen," he said to himself, "there would be no evidence against my father, and the disgrace that would result from his being unmasked as a swindler, would be prevented. How could their return be prevented?"

He began to think of putting them out of the way by violence. But soon he shuddered at the thought of a crime that would indelibly stain his hands, and make him miserable and wretched for all time and eternity. No, he would rather bear the disgrace and suffer innocently, than commit the dreadful sin for which neither penitence nor prayer could fully atone. But what should he do; how should he begin to avert the disgrace from himself and his father's family? He threw himself about restlessly in his hammock, and the morning dawned before he had reached any conclusion. The thought once flashed upon his mind that, if his father were actually guilty he ought to make restitution. On his return home, he would throw himself at his father's feet and implore him unceasingly to restore the money so wickedly obtained, to the defrauded family, until he had softened his father's hard heart.

Then the honor of the son would atone for the father's sin; and Martin, Leo and all the parties concerned would be silent for his sake, and bury the recollection of the fraud in the sea of oblivion. But this good and laudable resolution speedily vanished from Conrad's heart, because he despaired of influencing his father to adopt such a line of conduct. He rejected the thought before it had time to take root in his heart.

"It won't do, it won't do!" he cried.

"His property is of more account to him than the respect of his fellow-men, or the misery of his only son."

Conrad spoke these words not unjustly, for he had experienced his father's hard-heartedness and avarice in his early years. Cruel treatment drove him from that father's house, when a boy, fourteen years old, and forced him to serve as a cabin-boy on a West Indiaman. He had been

absent from his father's house for years without provoking any anxiety on the part of the father as to his fate. When he returned to the house, a lad of eighteen or nineteen years of age, to beg his father's pardon, he had been driven away with abusive words, and mercilessly thrust upon the world.

Some years afterwards, a sort of reconciliation was effected, after old Elshöft had become convinced that the son could make his way in the world without the father's assistance; but a genuine, hearty affection never existed between the father and son, and could not be expected. After a short stay at home, Conrad took a place on a vessel, and at length, after a series of shifting fortunes, reached the Dolphin. Not fearing the dangers and perils of the whale-fishery, he hoped to secure a small capital, which would aid him in his future operations, independently of his father.

But this plan might be completely destroyed and thrown overboard, if, on

the return of the Dolphin, his father should be proven guilty of the crime that Leo charged upon him, and Martin hoped to prove. No one would place confidence in the son of a convicted swindler—no one would have any business relations with him. It was not at all singular that he endeavored to devise ways and means to avert this stroke from himself and his father. If this could be done openly and honorably, Conrad would not hesitate to do it, as he was naturally of a kind, noble heart, although his education had been miserably neglected. But, as he failed to think of such a plan, no one could predict to what step his passion, and the fear of ignominy and disgrace might drive him.

It would have been best for Conrad to have shunned lying—to have acknowledged openly that he was the son of the man who was charged with so grievous a crime, and then to have supported and defended his father as far as possible. If he had afterwards been satisfied that his

father had really committed the offence, he could have urged him to make amends for it by restoring the stolen property to the proper owners. If his father would refuse to do this, the son would be free to declare publicly that he was not a participant in his father's guilt, but that he would himself try to make amends for the same in case he were ever able so to do.

If Conrad had dealt with the case thus, he would have been free from all guilt; no one would ever have reproached him, and he would have spared himself many a bitter hour and many a reproach of his conscience. But he was weak, and lacked the courage to act promptly and openly, and while he was fearing the contempt of his companions, he persisted in the lie he had told Martin. He hoped that a welcome accident might possibly help him.

Whale-fishing was a perilous occupation; the ship might perish, with all her crew. Martin and Leo might meet with an accident. He himself might lose his

life. In short, a thousand things might happen, which would prevent the discovery that he dreaded so much. Finally he concluded that things might go as they pleased; he would be wholly passive, and, on the return of the vessel-and even then only if absolutely necessary, he would act as circumstances should indicate. Conrad was satisfied with this conclusion, and continued to perform his duty untiringly along with the rest, although not with the pleasure and lively active zeal that animated the rest of the crew, and especially our young friend Leo. He moved about moodily and silently, even the liveliest jokes of his comrades scarce won a feeble smile from him.





CHAPTER VII.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

the Dolphin at length reached the waters where whales were generally found. Sharp watch was now kept, not only on the deck, but the rigging was crowded with sailors, who were gazing in all directions to discover, if the huge black back of a whale could be distinguished anywhere above the surface of the water.

Leo was not inactive during this general excitement. He hung upon the rope ladders from early in the morning to late at night, and kept his sharp bright eyes on the look-out. He scarcely took time to satisfy his hunger. After eating a few

mouthsful, he would climb with extreme adroitness up to the top of the mast, and only laughed when old Martin warned him against being too fool-hardy.

"As active as a cat!" the old pilot would then mutter to himself. "In fact in four weeks' time, he has become our best sailor. Well! Captain Bertram will not regret having taken him on board, and I have a friend in him, as dear to me indeed as though he were my own son. I am anxious to see what he will do on our first whale-chase. He is strong and active enough, and I think he doesn't lack dexterity, for lately in our harpoon practice, he always struck the centre of the target. We shall see, we shall see! But not a single whale has yet suffered himself to be seen. They must know that old Martin is once more upon the trail!"

In fact the Dolphin had up to this time been so unfortunate, that it seemed as though the voyage would turn out a failure. Weeks had elapsed without the appearance of a single whale, although not

a minute passed without an inspection of the whole ocean, as far as visible from the vessel. Captain Bertram became fretful, old Martin growled, and the sailors seemed to have forgotten how to laugh and jest. Another week passed away, when the Captain came to his pilot, and shaking his head, said:

"This can't go on any longer, Martin! The time for our return is drawing near, and hardly a month remains suitable for our work. If we don't make good use of the time, we shall be shut in by the ice, and be forced to spend the winter at the North. And that wouldn't suit us or our employer, who has paid a good round sum for the Dolphin's outfit."

"Very true, Captain," replied old Martin.

"But what is to be done? The cunning rogues must have heard of our affection for them, and stay away on that account."

"Now, Martin, I was thinking that we might rather than go back to Bremen empty-handed, do something else," said the Captain. "You know that every body will laugh at us if we haven't at least one whale on board."

"Yes, indeed, Captain! But what are we to do, if the cunning rogues don't let us catch a glimpse of them?"

"Well, Martin, I think we might push a little nearer their homes, instead of cruising about in this region. Hoping and waiting fool many a man, old fellow. How would it be if we set sail for Spitzbergen?"

Martin stared at the Captain, and looked very much perplexed. "Captain," he said, "that would be great risk, for the season is already advanced."

"But there will still be time enough to return, in case nothing is found in that latitude," replied the Captain. "Fortune favors the brave, Martin."

"Yes, indeed—and boldly begun is half the battle," said Martin, who began to accustom himself to the idea of sailing in a higher latitude. "Yes, indeed, in whalefishing that never fails, and if we only persevere we might still get a couple of large fellows on board. And after that to the right about—all sails hoisted for home, and, if necessity requires it, right through the ice-fields. Well, Captain, if you think the thing promises well, old Martin has nothing to say against it. We must not waste any time."

"Well, then, trusting in God, let us do it; back the wheel, old sea-bear."

Martin seized the spokes of the wheel with all his force, and with his strong arm turned the head of the Dolphin towards the North. The sails were trimmed properly, and the keel cut the foaming waves with the swiftness of the wind. Although the sailors knew that it was a dangerous venture to steer northward so late in the season, yet there was not a man in the crew who didn't hail the bold and daring enterprize of the Captain, with a glad shout and a loud huzza.

The heart of a bold sailor is always eager for a fight with the monsters of the sea, and considers the danger as nothing in contrast with the disgrace of returning home empty-handed. It is true that old Martin often had an anxious expression on his face, when he looked at the almanac and was reminded by it, that the season was far advanced; but he always drove away unpleasant thoughts, and muttered to himself: "Fortune favors the brave! Only go forward boldly. It is certainly no more than our obligation and duty, to undergo hardship and danger for the benefit of our employer. God will help us when the danger is at hand!"

All eyes were on the look-out for whales more diligently than ever, because the further they sailed North the greater the probability that they would meet some of the monsters. Still none were to be seen—the ocean seemed empty, and Captain Bertram muttered and grumbled every day more and more.

"It's of no use, Martin!" he said to his pilot, one evening. "Fortune has deserted us, and we must begin to think of making our way back, with God's assistance."

"Not before we have seen the sharp peaks of the ice-bergs of Spitzbergen!" replied Martin. "No man must be justified, Captain, in saying that we have neglected our duty. If all our efforts are of no avail, it will be so because it is God's will, and we must be content with the result. That's your way of thinkingtoo, Captain; and I know very well that you are only trying me when you talk of turning back. But you don't know old Martin very well if you think his heart and courage are not in the right place. Yes, Captain, we must stick to the hunt, and we may yet catch the good fortune that seems now to be flying away from us."

The Captain looked up to the sky, and noticing the position of the sun, which was sinking rapidly into the sea, he said: "The days have become very short! But what of that? To Spitzbergen we must go, even though we shall be obliged to sail through ice-bergs all the way. Courage, Martin!"

Martin continued to steer firmly towards the North. He avoided, with great adroitness, the ice-bergs that were floating heavily and slowly in the water, and didn't leave his post until the morning dawned. The ship had escaped many a peril during the night. The further north they sailed, the thicker the ice-bergs, like swimming islands, driven about by wind and currents in all directions.

But now the sun exposed to the eyes of the crew a wide open expanse of green sea, on which nothing was visible save a few white peaks rising near the distant horizon, which gave no immediate cause for fear. Martin called Leo, put him in charge of the wheel, enjoined him to keep the ship firmly and constantly in the same direction, and to awake him in case the ice-bergs were driven near the vessel. Leo promised to obey the instructions literally, and Martin went below to snatch a few hours of quiet sleep after his long nightwatch. This time, however, the brave Martin was not allowed to close his eyes.

Scarcely had he gone down the steps, when a loud shout came from the masthead, and a voice screamed out: "Whales, whales! A whole shoal of them in the nor'west."

"Where," thundered the pilot, from whom all sleepiness had disappeared in a trice, hurrying up the stairs again, "where, Hans?"

"In the nor'west—two—three—five—seven head!" the voice replied from above.
"They are spouting water high in the air from their noses, just like water-spouts—and there—hallo, pilot! there are five head more in the nor'east. Hurrah, boys! there's fine sport ahead!"

A loud shout of joy burst forth from the crew, who had rushed up from their hammocks at the first notice; and Martin fairly screamed out to Captain Bertram. "We have found them, Captain! We have found them! Hurrah, lads, up with the harpoons. Launch the boats and take your places! Hurrah, Captain! Fortune favors the brave! There's a whole shoal

of lively fellows, and now you can see how we'll pounce upon them! Forward, lads!"

A scene of indescribable confusion followed. Every body was in every body else's way; some of the sailors sprang into the boats, and, launching them, seized the oars; some threw in the lines and harpoons; others, as yet not dressed, threw their clothes down in the boats, so as not to be left behind, and Captain Bertram arranged with the pilot the plan of attack.

"We have seven boats, Captain; and hence three of these fellows can be attacked without further ceremony," said Martin, quickly. "I will go ahead with two of the boats; the command of the others can be entrusted to Assistant Pilot Bartels and Boatswain Koop. Both are excellent at the harpoon. Here, Leo, quick into the boat. You can show today whether you have learned anything lately."

Captain Bertram expressed himself satisfied with Martin's plans, and the latter sprang with Leo into the first good boat that was ready to be launched. The oars were dipped into the water, and the frail boat shot like an arrow over the waves. While the stout sailors, of whom there were four, besides Leo and Martin, in the boat, were rowing with all their might, the pilot was getting the reel and line ready, examining the harpoon, to see whether it was sharp enough, and firmly fastened to the rope, and instructing Leo once more in those things to which he should pay attention in the chase. Leo's countenance was radiant with delight, his eyes sparkled, and his heart throbbed violently. He listened, however, attentively to every word spoken by his instructor, and stored it away in memory.

"You must also keep close to me all the while, and when you see that the whale cannot get away from us, then you may try your own hand," said the old sailor. "Take care, however, my lad, that you don't get caught in the line, if you are so fortunate as to drive the harpoon into the whale's back. If it should get a turn about you, the whale would drag you down along with him, and you would be beyond recovery. Caution is profitable in all kinds of business, and no one dare neglect it in whale-fishing."

While Martin was giving these instructions, and Leo was listening attentively, the two boats had approached within a cable-length (720 feet) of the whale.

"Now spring over into your own boat, Leo!" said Martin. "And notice particularly how I make my attack upon the whale. Let it be your aim to keep as close to me as possible. Don't be seduced into throwing a harpoon, though the fellows move right under your nose. And now, attention, comrades! Briskly forward! I see a little fellow, some sixty or seventy feet long, whose more intimate acquaintance I should like to make. Strike your oars firmly—don't splash, so as to scare the fellow prematurely, and

drive him away. Forward, forward, men!"

Old Martin, as he was saying these words, stood upon the seat, and, poising the heavy harpoon in his hand like a javelin, took his position on the prow of the boat. Then, supporting himself firmly on his left foot, and leaning slightly forward, he watched, with a quick eye, the movements of the monstrous animal, which was playing around freely and sportively in the clear water, as though he didn't fear the slightest danger from the approaching boat. Martin's eye shone still more brightly, and his powerful form steadied itself still more firmly, as he raised his arm with the harpoon.

"Now, my lads," he said, in a suppressed voice, which trembled, in spite of his self-control, "now let the boat shoot alongside, and pass as close as possible to him. A little further forward, so that he doesn't crush the boat with his tail, and now! May the good Lord give us success!"

Once more he lifted his arm up high for the stroke—paused a few seconds, while the spectators, with breathless expectation, divided their attention between him and the whale, and then suddenly hurled the harpoon with such force into the dark back of the whale, that it seemed to have been thrown from the muzzle of a fire-arm. The sharp, steel-pointed, barbed end of the harpoon buried itself deeply in the body of the monster, and the staff vibrated for a few seconds under the force of the blow. Old Martin twisted his weather-beaten visage into a short, almost inaudible laugh, quickly seized the line to which the harpoon was fastened, and said, more to himself than to his comrades: "This fellow won't escape us —the stroke was good, and we shan't go back to Bremen empty-handed."

But little time was allowed for further remarks, the whale had scarcely felt the pain of the wound, when he shook himself convulsively, raised his tail high out of the water, and then beat the surface with such an enormous force, that it resounded as though a ten pounder was discharged. The water fell in torrents on all sides, and the boat quivered from the vibrations; but it was fortunate that it escaped the strokes. The whale spouted up into the air, through his nostrils, a stream of water mingled with blood, as thick as a man's arm, and then to escape their death-bringing weapons, dashed down as quick as lightning into the depths of the sea, where his enemies could not follow him. But his efforts to save himself were all in vain. The harpoon was too surely fastened to the line, and had been thrown with too much care and force, for him to get rid of it. The rope was payed off from the reel- with frightful rapidity, and the latter began to smoke as though it were on fire.

"Dash water upon it!" cried Martin, seizing a second harpoon, so as to be in readiness when the whale appeared again on the surface, which must be very soon.

One of the sailors, in obedience to the

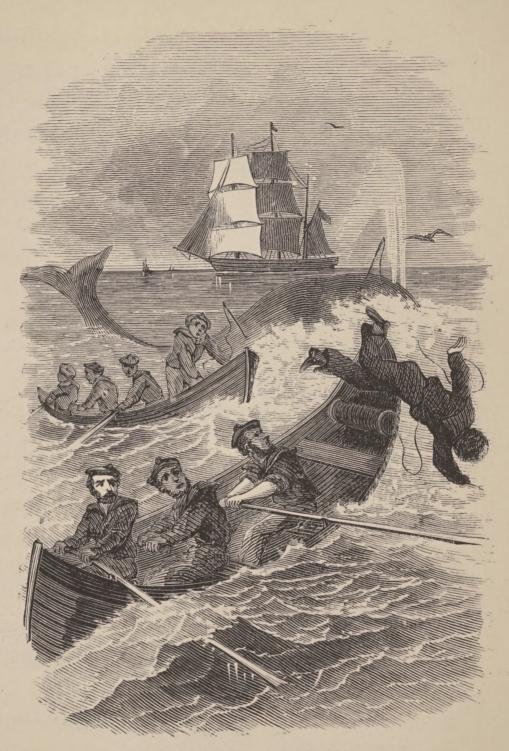
pilot's orders, poured water upon the reel. and the others rowed with all their might in the direction which Martin, who was accurately observing the movements of the whale, through those of the rope to which he was attached, and which furnished them with tolerable certainty, pursued. A few minutes were passed in breathless silence. Every eye was scanning the water, so as to detect the whale as soon as he would come up to get air, and every hand rowed with all its power with the view of being as near to him as possible at that instant. Leo kept his boat close to Martin's, and watched with quick, sharp eyes the progress of the chase.

"Hold yourself in readiness, my lad!" the pilot cried out. "Our line is nearly all payed out, and if the whale doesn't soon appear, we must take yours to help us. Closer, closer here, Leo—a minute more and it is too late—we shall have to cut the rope or lose our lives, for the wounded whale will carry boat, crew and

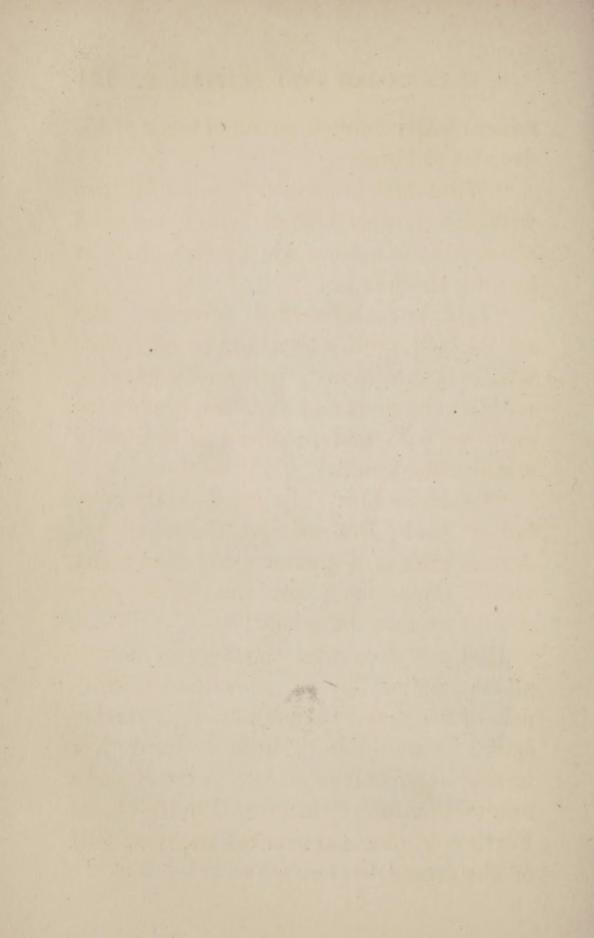
everything else down under the water. Ha, Leo, there he is again."

About fifty paces ahead the waves were lifted up, and the back of the wounded animal emerged like a great black rock, from the waters. Without the necessity of an order, the sailors rowed up to the monster, and a second harpoon hurled by Martin's strong arm, pierced the animal's back. At the same time Leo threw down his oar, seized a harpoon, sprang to the prow of his boat and imitated Martin's example.

The harpoon flew and entered the animal—but the boat, making a sudden movement to one side, Leo staggered—there was a scream—and the lad plunged overboard into the sea, where he disappeared in a trice in the foaming waves, which were fearfully agitated by the convulsive movements of the whale. The sailors in his boat shrieked aloud, save one who sat in the stern, pale and mute, and no sound proceeded from his half-opened lips, although his whole countered



LEO LOST IN THE SEA.
"The lad plunged overboard into the sea." p. 120.



nance clearly enough gave evidence of his dread and horror.

"What has happened?" cried Martin, with his powerful voice, which sounded above all the noise made by the whale in lashing the waves.

"Leo is overboard!" screamed the sailors in the other boat, to the old pilot, whose face, although previously glowing with excitement and exercise, became at once as pale and colorless as a freshly whitewashed wall.

"Gracious Lord!" he cried-"the poor lad is lost! But no—let the whale go. A man's life is of greater value than filthy gold. Back, men, cut the ropes, even should we lose the whale!"

Had not Leo won the love of nearly all the sailors by his friendliness, kindness of heart and his acknowledged daring spirit, he would have been certainly lost in this important crisis, when every one's mind was intensely interested in the chase. Fortunately he had secured the good will of the crew.

The boats were immediately pulled away from the whale, and the animal, after giving some furious blows with its tail, darted like a flash down into the depths, and the raging, angry waves, closed over him. The eyes of Martin and the other sailors sought around in great anxiety for Leo. Not a trace of him was to be seen. Suddenly a human form emerged from the deep. A pale face, half-covered with wet hair, was seen-and, without hesitation, Martin plunged into the sea. In less than a minute he had seized Leo's unconscious body, held him upright in the water with one hand, and swam with the other slowly and carefully towards the boat, which was speedily brought to his assistance.

No one of the sailors, who formed the crew of his boat, was more zealous and anxious than he who had seemed so wholly paralyzed with dread and horror at the accident. When Leo was taken into the boat, he burst into tears, covered

his face with his hands, and in deep agitation muttered a few words which none of them understood. Leo came quickly to his senses. He was but slightly stunned by a stroke, which the whale had given him, fortunately enough only after its strength was broken down and almost paralyzed. In a few minutes he shook the water from his dripping, brown locks.

"I am all right again, Martin!" he said to the honest sailor, whose friendly countenance was now radiant with joy, because he had saved his dear lad, and could look upon him as out of danger. "Look here, how I can swing the harpoon! The next one shall go every inch as deep as the other into the whale's back. Where is the fellow?"

"Ah, ha! if you talk that way," shouted the brave pilot, "we can afford to look around again for him. But away with the harpoons! He has had enough of them, and we will finish him with the lances. Come closer with my boat, chil-

dren! And now Leo take care of yourself. You have already found out that whale-fishing isn't rabbit hunting."

With the last words, Martin by a bold and powerful spring, leaped back into his own boat, which has been brought alongside.

"Forward, forward, children, and may God protect us!" he cried. "The rope is almost entirely payed out! Larboard! larboard! Ha, that's right! The danger of being upset is now over. Only let us gain what we have lost. Row, lads, row, in your best style! It never was more necessary than now, and as true as I am old Martin, you shall have double rations if you prevent the fellow's escape."

The words of the old pilot acted like magic. By the promise of double rations, their interest in the chase was raised to the highest pitch. These seemed to give giant-like strength to the brave fellows. No fish ever moved more rapidly through the water, than the boat commanded by Martin. In a few seconds it

had gained a stretch of several hundred feet, and exactly in the right nick of time reached the spot where Martin calculated that the wounded whale would rise to the surface. And there he lay on the water, in the centre of a broad dark-red circle.

Blood mixed with oil streamed from his wounds; blood and water spouted out of his spiracles (breathing holes) like fountains. The two boats approached him. Martin and Leo, each hurled a harpoon into the half-exhausted animal, and then all the sailors, except the two who managed the boats, threw down their oars and grasped the sharp-pointed lances, with which they thrust for the heart of the animal

The death-struggles of the monstrous creature were fearful. He lashed the blood-stained water so terribly with his tail, that huge waves like mountains were formed, and the sound was like that of artillery in battle. The sailors in charge of the boats, were obliged to be careful to keep them out of the way of the strokes,

which would have shattered them into a thousand pieces. But the attacking party not intimidated by the fearful dangers with which they were threatened every instant, redoubled their thrusts, and forced him pretty soon to seek safety in flight.

Once more this colossus of the sea dived under the water; but the time he spent below the surface before he was obliged to come up for air, became shorter and shorter, and his movements also became more languid and feeble. Then, he raised himself high in the air—a low gurgling sound escaped from his open jaws—and he fell heavily back upon the water, convulsive shrugs of his huge body followed—and at length he turned over on his side and breathed his last. Three loud huzzas were given by the sailors, announcing to their comrades the successful termination of the contest.

A white flag was raised, and the old pilot wiping the perspiration from his brown forehead, said pleasantly: "Well, lads, this is a master-piece—without help from the others, we have secured one fellow who will be worth his two thousand dollars to our employer. You have richly earned your double rations, and old Martin will see that they are dealt out without stint. What do you think now, lads? Shall we first tow our prize to the Dolphin, or go to help our comrades over there, who are having a brisk time with the whales? This fellow can't get away from us now, you see, but those over there are still fresh upon their legs, or rather, I should say, upon their fins."

The sailors' zeal in the chase was now excited, and they had become very enthusiastic. With one voice they begged the pilot to lead them to another attack, and Martin said, with a hearty laugh: "I thought so! I thought so! Yes, yes, only let a man take the life of one, and he has no further rest until the very last one is caught or escapes. Now, my lads, we must do our duty-therefore let us move off briskly."

The sailors seized their oars again with

a loud huzza, and pulled over the water to the other boats, which had also entered upon the chase, and made attacks upon some of the largest whales. Old Martin arranged his harpoon lines again, examined his weapons to find whether they had been injured, and should be laid aside as unserviceable, and after he had put everything in order, turned to Leo and inquired how it came to pass that he fell overboard into the sea? Leo was unable to give a satisfactory explanation of his accident, and the other sailors asserted that they were not able to assign any cause or reason for it. The sailor who sat in the stern, was the only one silent, and his brown cheeks became pale when Martin, turning to him, said: "Now, Elshöft, you have had the best opportunity of seeing the accident from the rear, and hence you ought to know exactly how it happened!"

"I don't know anything about it!" replied the sailor, quickly. "I was only

looking at the whale, and did not observe Leo falling overboard."

Old Martin gave Elshöft a long, searching stare, and the latter became alternately white and red, and turned his head quickly aside with the view of concealing his emotions.

"I must keep a still sharper eye on him," muttered the pilot to himself. "The fellow appears to me as though his conscience wasn't clear; and in fact, hum! hum! he is better acquainted with that old rascal Elshöft than he will admit."

The others entertained no suspicion, and each one believed that Leo had lost his balance and fallen overboard, at the instant when he threw the harpoon with all his force. But Conrad Elshöft muttered in a low tone of voice: "O Lord, pardon my sins; lead me not into temptation; but deliver me from the wicked thoughts which are always entering into my heart."

The miserable man sorely needed the aid of heavenly grace in his struggles

with the wicked one. It had been an almost imperceptible movement of his oar, that had caused Leo to lose his balance. Had this been accidental, or from design? No one knew save God, who looks into the inmost soul of man, and tries his reins and heart. It was most likely that Conrad used the opportunity to get rid of the youth, whom he feared greatly. He could safely calculate that Martin would plunge in the sea to save his favorite, and that both would lose their lives in the bustle and confusion which would follow. In fact, their lives were saved only in consequence of the diving of the whale. Who can saywhether Conrad rejoiced or not at the result?

The boats flew quickly over the water, and were, in a few minutes, in the midst of another exciting scene, full of conflict and peril. Two more of the largest whales were killed. The rest sought safety in flight, and no one cared to follow them, because there was enough now

to do, in bringing safely to the vessel the rich prizes of the day. Ropes were fastened to the tails of the dead monsters, and they were towed to the Dolphin, where arrangements were made immediately to take on board the blubber and the whalebone—the valuable parts of the animal. Two days were thus occupied before they were able to go on another chase. No one would listen to any suggestion about returning, although the season was very far advanced; no one seemed to fear the ice-bergs and ice-fields that were floating around them, and by which they might possibly be shut in, if the severe northern winter began a little earlier than usual. The prow of the Dolphin was still directed northward, the sails were spread, and the good ship kept on, with a fresh wind, in the direction of Spitzbergen.





CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEAR HUNT.

which the whale-fishing of the Dolphin lasted, seven more whales, besides those taken on the first day, were captured, and the vessel had its full lading. It lay at anchor off the South-west of Spitzbergen, when Captain Bertram announced his intention to start in the morning for Bremen, after a few necessary repairs should be made to the vessel. The good ship had not escaped entirely uninjured from the perils to which it had been exposed. All hearts beat lightly and joyously.

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The Dolphin had been unusually successful, and no one doubted but that she would reach home, without further misfortune. A portion of the crew was employed in repairing and caulking the vessel; others were storing its valuable cargo away in the hold, while a few, among whom were Martin, Leo and Conrad Elshöft, were to be seen loitering about the deck, because their assistance was not needed, and they had already done their full share of the work.

Martin was talking with Leo about the success of the voyage, their expected prosperous return, and the joy that Leo's mother would feel when she folded her beloved son safe, sound and unhurt, once more in her arms. Neither dreamed that many a weary day would pass by before their feet should tread their native soil again.

The day, although cold, was beautiful and bright. The sun stood sparkling in the cloudless sky, and its rays were reflected from the sharp ice-crowned moun-

tain peaks of the neighboring island; so that in its light, these flashed and shone like diamonds. The atmosphere was unusually clear and transparent, and objects could be plainly discerned miles away from the observer.

Leo looked attentively at the surrounding scene, which in spite of the wintry solitude, was not devoid of attractions. His eye at times rested upon the ocean, with its numerous ice-fields, then upon the numerous streams of the curiously-cleft and jagged island, and then upon the snow-clad mountains that stood out with silvery splendor against the pale blue arch of the heavens.

"All is dead, desolate, barren and unfruitful," he said. "Not a stalk of grass adorns these wild, mournful snow fields, not a tree waves its green branches in the breeze, not a bird sings upon these bleak ice-clad mountains, and not a butterfly sports from flower to flower, in this inhospitable region. Still the scene is beautiful,

and all proclaim the power and greatness of the Creator."

"True, true, my lad," replied old Martin. "Nothing is devoid of attraction, that has come from our heavenly Father's hands. But do not imagine that nature is as desolate as she seems. The wintry solitude swarms with living creatures. The polar bear gets his subsistence upon those snow-clad plains; the shores swarm with walruses, seals, and sea-lions; rabbits and foxes defy the extreme severity of the polar winter; and even birds are not wanting, although they lack those many-colored brilliant feathers which their brothers wear in southern climes.

"Sea-gulls, goosanders, storm-petrels, the great white northern owls, make the rocks and the shores resound with their wild cries, and the Arctic sea is teeming with fish, whose number is beyond human conception. Yes, yes, my lad, we see everywhere the power of God, creating life and motion, even when the dull eye of man thinks to find nothing but the stiff sleep

of death. Why, look there, don't you see the shaggy form of a bear creeping around the extreme projection of that ice-clad rock?"

"I see her, I see her!" exclaimed Leo, holding his hand before his eyes, so as to keep off the dazzling light, reflected from the ice. "And see, Martin, there is her cub crawling close behind her. Oh! if we could only get both of them!"

"Hum! that might be done," growled Martin, following with his sharp eyes every movement of the prowling beast. "If she will only venture out upon the ice-fields, when she gets around the steep icy entrance to the same, she couldn't escape us, if we succeeded in cutting off her retreat. Hum! hum! bear meat isn't bad, and her shaggy skin would be quite acceptable to our employer. But, look, Leo, she is really going on the ice-fields. If we can only manage to get behind on the projection, we can secure both her and the little fellow! Halloo, Captain Bertram, a word with you!"

The Captain, who was superintending repairs in the forward part of the vessel, heard his pilot's shout, and came quickly. "What's the matter, Martin?" he asked.

"Hum! Leo and I have discovered a large polar bear upon the shore, and if we get after her she can hardly escape," replied Martin, whose eyes began to sparkle with anxiety for the hunt. "The whole affair will be over in an hour or two, and we shall get, in addition to the skin, a good supply of fresh meat for the vessel. What do you think of the idea, Captain?"

"I have no objection," he answered—
"only we can't spare the men, Martin.
Where is she? I don't see her."

"There, right in front on the ice-field, in a straight line with the wheel and the port, there," answered Martin, eagerly. "See, see, how she rolls along with her cub towards the ravine."

"True, true—now I distinguish her shaggy fur from the bright snow," said the Captain, adding immediately, "she

certainly could not escape, but we havn't the men to spare, and you know, Martin, we have no time to waste."

"Oh, Leo and I and Elshöft there—we are enough ourselves," replied old Martin. "Only give us the rifles, Captain, and leave the rest to me! It is not the first time that I have tried my hand at such sport."

"But the danger, Martin," said the Captain—"If you miss her—"

"The lad Leo will be along, and, to prepare for the worst, we will take our harpoons with us!" cried Martin, who was more anxious even than Leo for a struggle with the fierce inhabitant of the North. "Let us go, Captain, and I will assure you, that within two hours we will bring the bear and her cub on board."

Captain Bertram consented, and hurried down to his cabin to get three good rifles, with powder and balls. In the meantime Martin sprang into the first good boat, lowered it, and seized the oars. The Captain returned with the fire-arms,

Elshöft brought up three of the best harpoons, and everything was put into the boat rapidly. Then Elshöft and Leo sprang in, and Martin was about pushing off, when the Captain cried out:

"Halloo, Martin," he said, "better let it alone. There are gray clouds gathering over the mountains, and I fear we shall have a heavy snow-storm before we are two hours older. Only look, the sun is overcast with vapor."

Martin looked sharply around, and shook his head. "I can't dispute it, Captain!" he shouted back. "But before the storm comes on in full we shall be back—the distance to the projection can't be more than a quarter of a marine mile! Still, in case of necessity, throw us down a skin, Captain. That will keep us from freezing."

One of the cabin boys, at the order of the Captain, brought up a thick wolf-skin, and threw it into the boat. The three hunters then rowed briskly off, and in less than half an hour reached the projection.

The bear appeared not to notice them. Without any sign of disturbance, she was walking around the ice-field, seeking, apparently, prey for herself and her cub.

"She won't escape us," said Martin, as the boat shot round the projection and reached the icy bank. "Forward briskly, Elshöft! Pitch the harpoons on shore, and you, Leo, bring the rifles and the ammunition. So, now fasten the boat to the ice. That's all right! Now, forward, lads!"

Each hunter took a loaded rifle, and the three then walked slowly and carefully around the projection, Martin being in the advance. At the place where they should turn a corner, in order to bring their game in sight, Martin stopped a minute, stretched out his head, and looked after the bear.

"All right!" he said. "The fellow is standing by the side of a hole in the ice,

and is probably watching a seal that she wants for dinner. But wait, old one, your appetite will soon be gone. Carefully now, youngsters! Let us approach within shooting distance without disturbing her, then slowly take aim—sighting accurately at her head or breast, and not fire before we are sure of our aim.

"Let no one aim at the cub—it can't escape us if the mother is killed, whereas the latter will become terribly furious if we shoot the cub before her eyes. Don't fire before we get within fifty paces. If the beast scents us before we get so near, which is very likely, as their senses in acuteness excel everything, you must stand still and await her attack. When she is within ten paces of us, I will shoot first, next you, Leo, and finally, if it shall be necessary, you also Elshöft. But I think that it will hardly be necessary, for if she is not killed by the first shot, she certainly will be by the second. In case of extreme need, we have our harpoons.

Now, you know your orders—forward—and may God help us!"

They stepped quickly forward, but had not gone quite around the projection, when Martin stopped suddenly, looked carefully ahead, and after a few seconds said:

"I have changed my plan. No one can predict what may happen, and in any case, it is good to have a reserve. Listen, Elshöft—you remain here and cut off the bear's retreat. In case she don't show fight, and prefers a swift retreat, in the excitement we may miss our mark, and then both bear-skin and bear-meat will be lost, unless we command this pass. Yes, yes, remain here. We ought to despatch her; but if not, she will run right into your fire. Take a safe position, so that in case of necessity the furious animal cannot attack you, and besides, you will be more certain of your aim if fear doesn't make you tremble. Wait patiently for whatever may happen. The

bear will not be able to reach that projection, while you can take good aim at her there. Climb up to it. Quickly, my lad!"

Conrad Elshöft made no great objection to this plan. With the aid of his companions, he climbed up to the projection indicated, reached after his loaded rifle, and promised to keep good watch.

Leo and Martin betook themselves to the ice-fields without further delay, and crept along with their rifles cocked in their hands, and their harpoons trailing from their belts, towards the spot where the bear stood, staring earnestly with head bowed down, into a hole in the ice which the seals used from time to time as a breathing place. The hunters got within a hundred paces of her, without any sign that she knew any thing of approaching danger.

Suddenly, however, she raised her head, looked over to the side where Martin and Leo were standing, raised her nose and snuffed the air. The cub in answer to a

deep low growl, ran quickly to her, and put himself under her protection. Then she uttered a still more terrible growl and opened wide her blood red jaws, displaying a terrible double-row of sharp-pointed teeth.

"Down, down, my lad!" whispered Martin to his companion. "Down and don't stir. She hasn't seen us yet. Gently! Perhaps we can get still nearer to her. See, there she turns away and the cub rolls about over the ice as happy as if there were no hunters or rifle-balls in the world. Patience for a few minutes, and then we will go forward again."

Martin and Leo lay perfectly still on the ice, while the bear took her former position again and turned her back upon them. The cub waddled around, playing upon the ice or dancing in the snow that lay around in small piles, occasionally uttering cries, which the clearness of the atmosphere permitted the hunters' ears to catch very distinctly.

"The little monster is an excellent

ally!" whispered Martin to his companion. "Let him only keep on rolling and growling, so then we can safely get nearer. Forwards, Leo—but take care not to tread upon any thin ice, as it may betray us by its cracking. Keep close behind me."

The two hunters directed their course slowly and carefully up the steep, creeping along slowly on their knees. Avoiding all the unsafe places, Martin tried always to keep the snow-piles between them and the bear, so as to conceal their approach, and he was so successful in this, that they had gone some thirty paces forwards without attracting the bear's attention. Suddenly he paused.

"What's the matter?" whispered Leo.

"Why look there!" Martin replied also in a whisper. "That mischievous little cub has been rolling around in all directions, until it has nearly rubbed against us. I have half a mind to punish his impertinence with a ball. But no, silence, Leo! It may be that he will roll away

without noticing us. Such a young cub is often more stupid than a sheep."

The two hunters stood perfectly quiet, looking at the young bear, which stared at them as though puzzled, and made no sound. It didn't seem to feel afraid or timid, and after it had stared at the hunters a little, it moved slowly towards them until it was within five paces, when it stopped and began to growl.

"The miserable little cub will certainly bring the old bear about our ears, unless we silence her," said Martin. "There's no use of waiting now—loosen the harpoon from my belt, Leo!"

Leo was about executing the order, and had scarcely stretched out his arm, when the cub, beginning to feel his position unsafe, drew back frightened, and crawled backwards over the ice, snarling angrily.

"Now it's all over!" said Martin, peevishly. "Look out, my lad, before two minutes the old bear will be upon us. Only don't shoot until you are sure that you can strike a mortal spot, my lad. Ha! here she comes!"

Old Martin was not mistaken. The she bear accompanied by her cub came waddling towards them, and, when she saw the two men who were awaiting her attack with unflinching courage, uttered a frightful growl. I say with unflinching courage, although Leo was by no means very comfortable as it was the first time he had ever faced such an animal. Although a bold, courageous heart was beating in his breast, although his nerves had been sufficiently steeled by the manifold dangers he had passed through happily to prevent him from being frightened by any unusual appearances, still he felt his arms tremble when he raised his rifle to point its muzzle at the bear's head. She approached them slowly. When thirty paces off, she arose upon her hind feet, opened her blood-red jaws and struck out with her fore paws wildly in the air.

"Look out!" cried Martin. "I am going to shoot now, and if she doesn't

fall, then you must fire. But don't get nervous, Leo!"

"Don't let that worry you, Martin," he replied energetically, although his voice trembled slightly, and his cheeks were blanched. "I shan't desert you, if I am forced to die ten deaths."

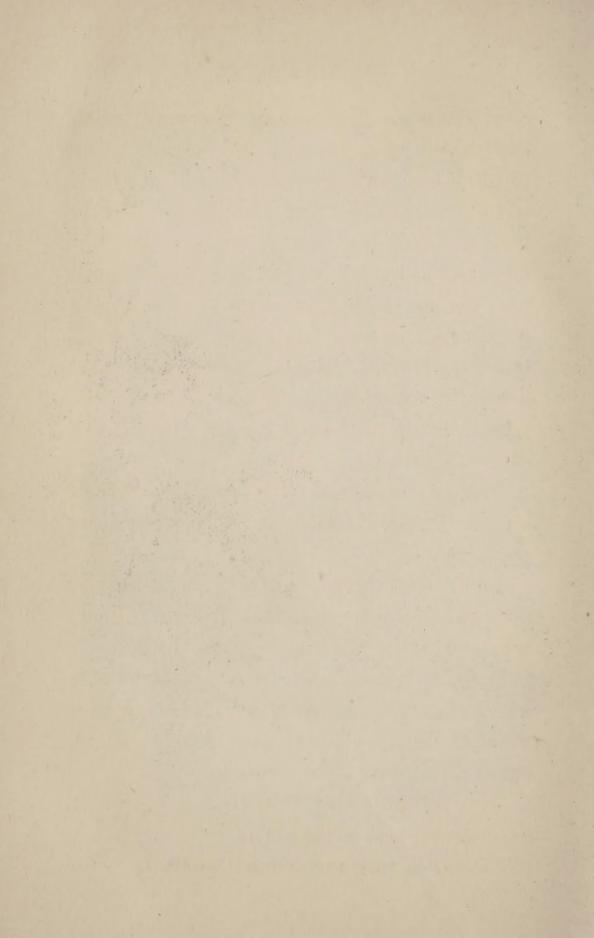
Martin paused an instant—then fired his piece, and a stream of blood, staining the shaggy covering of the bear's breast, showed plainly enough that he hadn't missed his aim. The bear sank upon allfours, rolled about for a minute, then suddenly sprang upon Martin with a mighty leap, and threw him down with the force of the blow.

"Shoot, Leo, or we are both lost!" he shrieked.

Leo rallied all his faculties. Instead of shooting from a distance, although deathly pale, yet stepping firmly, he approached the bear, just when she had placed her fore paws upon Martin's breast, whilst she stared fiercely with her widely-distended, blood-red eyes, at her



LEO SAVES MARTIN.
"Shoot, Leo, or we are both lost!" p. 148.



new enemy. Extending his arm, with the raised rifle, he put the muzzle close to her head and fired. She sprang back with a wild roar, and shook her bloody head. Leo's ball had wounded her, but whether mortally or not the youth could not decide. Martin, who was happily uninjured, sprang up from the ice as quick as thought, seized his harpoon, and hurled it with all his might at the bear, which, being wounded again, uttered another frightful roar.

"Steady now, Leo! She can't last much longer, for she is reeling. Use your harpoon, my lad!"

Leo seized the weapon with both hands, and awaited a fresh attack from the bear, while Martin picked up his discharged rifle from the ice, and turning it butt-end upwards, raised it like a club, with the view of dashing it against her skull in case she renewed the contest.

The animal was evidently very much exhausted, and seemed to have no wish to attack her armed enemies again. She

called to her side her cub, which had been lazily staring at the contest, rocking itself on its haunches, turned her back to both the hunters, and ran off in a slow trot.

"She certainly can't escape us now!" cried Martin, in great joy. "Let us load the rifles quickly, and follow her. On that side she can't escape, unless she plunges into the sea, where we can follow her in the boat. She can't hold out much longer, or she wouldn't have fled!"

"Shan't I call Elshöft, so that he may help us?" inquired Leo.

"No, no; we can do without him!" replied Martin. "But tell him to row the boat this way, so that it may be at hand in case we need it. Quick, my lad, or our prize will still escape us!"

Leo ran back quickly, and returned before Martin had finished loading the rifles.

"Now briskly forward!" said Martin.

"Leave the harpoons lie; they will be in our way in running, and we can pick them up on our return. Where is she?"

Ah, there she runs along the ice-wall, with her cub by her side. Hurry, my lad!"

While Martin was still speaking he began the pursuit, running over the ice-field in a quick trot. Leo was close by his side, and in a few minutes they were gaining rapidly upon her.

"She is exhausted!" said Martin.
"Loss of blood, and her wounds, have crippled her—she can't escape now!"

The two hunters increased their speed, keeping their prize in view, until suddenly she turned a corner and—disappeared.

"She is off!" cried Leo.

"Yes, but we will soon see her again! Only let us get ahead fast!" replied Martin.

In a few minutes they had reached the place where the bear had disappeared, and Martin uttered a cry of surprise and vexation at finding a narrow ravine in the ice-wall, through which the pursued animal must have escaped. The bloody track, which was quite plain upon the

ice and snow, confirmed this supposition manifestly.

"The beast has outwitted us," cried Martin. "But it shan't benefit her! She can't go very far, and we will follow until we overtake her!"

Leo hesitated, and cast a sharp glance at the sky, which had become covered, in the meantime, with dark clouds. The Sun had almost disappeared under the vapors, and in the direction of the Dolphin there was a thick gray cloud, impenetrable to the eye. Leo pointed silently, with his finger upwards.

"It's of no consequence," said Martin, taking a hasty glance at the sky. "So long as the wind does not rise, and shower down the snow-flakes, that little bit of mist is of no consequence. Come on, forwards! Leo! we'll risk a quarter of an hour more, and then there'll be still time to return! If we can't get the whole bear on board, we can save at least her magnificent fur."

Without hesitation the pilot, generally a

prudent man, but now wholly infatuated by his interest in the chase, plunged into the ravine. Leo followed him, although with anxious heart. He would have preferred to have kept Martin back, for a presentiment of coming danger was oppressing his heart. Still he feared that Martin might misunderstand him, or charge him with cowardice; and in no case would he desert his well-meaning, true, and faithful friend. So he kept close behind him, full of hope that the wounded bear, exhausted by pain and loss of blood would not be able to go very far.

In fact the two came out of the ravine upon a broad open space in less than five minutes, and a joyous shout from Martin, announced that he had found the fugitive again. The bear lay stretched out upon the snow, which was covered with her blood all around, and the cub was jumping about her, whining and growling piteously. As Martin and his companion drew nearer, she made an effort to get up and run away. But her strength was ex-

hausted, and she sank back again on the ice after staggering for a few seconds. A well-aimed shot from Martin, put an end to her sufferings. The ball passed through the eye into the brain, and in dying she stretched herself out on all fours. Leo threw a noose over the cub, and soon he lay on the ice, bound and helpless.

"There now we have them both!" said Martin, as a smile of triumph played over his brown countenance. "We can easily slip the cub over into the boat, and can soon strip the skin from the old bear. Take hold there Leo, we haven't any time to spare!"

Drawing out their knives both hunters went to work quickly, and had nearly completed the task, when old Martin suddenly looked up, and bending his head to one side examined the sky carefully. Leo also stopped in the midst of his work, and looked in amazement at his companion, in whose countenance the flush of anxious care could be recognized.

"Don't you hear it, Leo?" asked Martin.

"Certainly, a dull roaring in the distance, which seems to be approaching us gradually," replied Leo. "It may be nothing but a wind squall, which has been caught in the mountain ravines while moving over the ice-fields."

"God grant that you are right!" said Martin. "But no," he continued, and his brown cheeks became pale—"this is something worse than a wind-squall. Hark, hark! there it comes on howling. The sky is growing darker every minute. Merciful Father! here are the snow flakes whirling down! Away, away, my lad! Leave everything be, gather all your strength so that we can get to the boat and cover ourselves up in the wolf-skin. Away as fast as your feet can carry you."

No words were necessary to stimulate Leo, for he knew, as well as Martin, that this snow-storm might cost them both their lives, unless they could reach some shelter. If they reached the boat, that would help them, for they could draw it on the ice, turn it over, and crawl under it. There they could stay like a snake in its hole, and the storm might rage and howl at pleasure. They could be safe from its fury and violence until it was over. The thick wolf-skin would protect them sufficiently from the penetrating cold which always accompanies a snow-storm in the northern regions, and so there would have been no cause for extraordinary anxiety if Elshöft had only acted as an honest, true man, and had brought his boat to the place indicated.

Without saying another word, which in any case would have been swallowed up in the howling of the hurricane, Martin and Leo ran through the ravine, whose wall fortunately protected them somewhat from the violence of the terrible storm. When they came out on the other side, the storm suddenly slackened, the fine snow-flakes fell less rapidly, and it seemed as though the storm, that had

so suddenly come on, was about as suddenly to cease.

"We are saved!" said Leo, taking a long breath. "The air is calm again, and the sky is clearing off."

"Go ahead, go ahead, my lad!" replied Martin. "It is only a pause, during which the storm will gather fresh power, and then will break forth with greater violence. God grant only that Elshöft has his boat at the right place!"

They ran forward with increased speed. In a few minutes they reached the edge of the ice-field, and sought their companion with anxious hearts. But as far as their eyes could reach, there was no trace of the boat to be discovered, and clenching his teeth to conceal his agitation, Martin groaned out: "We are lost! The traitorous dog has left us in the lurch! My poor, poor Leo, why must I take you with me to destruction?"

Leo turned his eyes from the shore out to the sea, and a low cry of astonishment escaped from his lips. "What is it?" asked Martin.

"See there"—replied Leo—"there is the boat out in the ocean, and Elshöft is rowing with all his might for the ship."

The cloud, which had up to this time hung thick and heavy over the water, was slightly lighted up, and Martin also saw the boat plainly. It was still within reach of his voice, and, holding both his hands before his mouth, to increase the sound, he shouted in a voice of thunder: "Boat, ahoy!"

Elshöft undoubtedly heard the shout, for he turned his head towards the coast he was leaving and ceased rowing, evidently undetermined what he should do.

"The rascal wants to desert us!" said Martin. "To save his own miserable life he deserts us; otherwise he would not have left the place where duty and honor should have compelled him to remain. But hark, what's that?"

A dull sound coming over the sea, vibrated through the air. Another fol-

lowed, and in a short space of time a third.

"Signal guns from the Dolphin, recalling us to the ship!" said Leo.

"Yes," added Martin bitterly, "and that rascal has heard them as well as we have. See how rapidly he rows off, turning his back upon us! Miserable villain! the judgment of Heaven will reach you, even if you do escape ours. Now, Leo, there is no help for us, save only our powers of endurance and our heavenly Father above. We must go back to the bear, and cover ourselves up in his skin until the storm, that is ready to burst upon us, shall be past. Come, come, every minute in our present situation is precious."

Both the men hurried back to the ravine, and had scarcely reached it, when the storm broke loose and covered them with masses of snow. It became, at the same time, so extremely cold, that the moisture of the breath froze about their mouths, and a paralyzing numbness seized the limbs of the less hardy Leo.

"I can't go any further!" he groaned out, and leaned against the side of the ravine for support, wholly exhausted. "Save yourself, Martin, and leave me to my fate."

"God forbid!" replied Martin. "Here lean upon my arm—so—and now for-

ward!"

Leo tried to drag along, but after a few steps, his limbs refused to do service, and he swooned away.

"Gracious Father, lend us Thy aid, for the sake of Thy Son, our Saviour!" cried Martin, in despair. "Leo, Leo, you must go on with me, or you'll be stiff and stark in five minutes."

"Then let me die!" stammered Leo.
"My strength is all gone."

Martin cast a wild look upwards, and wrung his hands.

"No, no!" he muttered then to himself
—"I will save you—or die with you.

God will assist me and give me the necessary strength."

He bent over Leo, lifted him up, put the half-stiffened youth over his shoulder, and ran with him through the ravine. Breathless and exhausted he reached the spot where the bear lay. With one jerk he tore the remainder of the skin from the animal, rolled it around Leo, himself and the young cub, and soon found that life and motion were restored to the frozen limbs of his young friend. Leo sighed, and asked: "Where am I?"

"In safety, at least for the present!" shouted old Martin. "The bear's skin and the young bear have saved us. We are lying here warm, snugly wrapped up, and the little shaggy fellow throws out heat like a stove. Only have patience, Leo! All may yet be well, if the storm doesn't last too long and the Dolphin isn't torn from her anchorage. Cold, wind, and snow—these three enemies cannot harm us now."

Although our friends did not suffer

from the fearful storm, so far as bodily comfort was concerned, still the roaring sounded awfully in their ears. They heard the raging and the howling of the storm, and in the midst of all this, occasionally a fearful crash, which seemed to shake the very foundations of the earth. They found out afterwards, from their own observations, that those monstrous crashing sounds were produced by icebergs,* which, being undermined by the dashing waves, lost their centres of grav-

^{*} The formation of ice-bergs is explained in the following manner: The snow that falls in immense quantities, every year, upon the barren regions of the polar zone, is melted during the short season of summer, and gathers itself together in countless brooks and rivulets, which flow towards the larger streams and the coast. Here the chilled water soon freezes. and receives a new layer of ice every year, so that, perhaps, in the course of centuries, the mass of ice may increase so as to form a mountain, several thousand feet high. The melting of the snow, that falls upon this monstrous mass of ice, serves both for its increase and to fill its cavities and fissures, thus making the whole compact and smooth. The incessant motion of the water of the sea gradually undermines the base of the ice-berg, and then there is only required some extraordinary concussion, such as that produced by a storm, to plunge the immense mass with a terrible crash into the sea. The ice-berg floats away as if it were an island in the sea, until, being driven southward by winds and currents, it is gradually dissolved and lost in the great Atlantic ocean.

ity, and were torn loose from the shore and plunged into the sea with a sound like that of an earthquake.

Not without fear and anxious care did Martin and Leo await the quieting of the excited elements. Many long and tedious hours passed by before they dared to leave their place of refuge, and to free themselves from the thick masses of snow that had been piled upon their bodies.





CHAPTER IX

. THE BOAT.

EARLY twenty-four hours had elapsed since Martin and Leo had been, so to speak, buried alive, when the former suddenly was aroused from a state of stupefaction—it could scarcely be called sleep. He had felt something cold and moist on his face, and when he raised up he heard a slight rustling, and all became quiet again.

"Are you awake, Leo?" asked the pilot, gently. "A fox awoke me just now."

"I am quite awake," replied Leo, who had been aroused by the sudden movement of his companion.

"It seems to me that the storm is over," continued Martin. "At least I 164

hear nothing now but the breathing of our cub, who appears to be quite contented in his mother's skin. Let us try to creep out of our grave, Leo!"

Groping around in the dark Martin very soon found one end of the bear-skin, and threw it off. Extending his hand, he reached the snow, and tried to push it to one side as far as possible. This was a difficult task, because the snow was fine and light, and couldn't be made to adhere, but kept sliding back like sand whenever Martin succeeded in forming a pile. Leo, however, came to his assistance, and by their united efforts they succeeded at last in working through a distance of several feet.

"An immense quantity of snow must have fallen," said Leo, impatiently. "Shan't we soon come to day-light?"

"Only have patience!" replied Martin.
"I begin to recognize a faint glimmer, which must come from the light of the Sun. Ha, there's the air—but it's as cold as ice."

Indeed, it was as cold as ice—that current of air which forced its way through the opening made in their snow-cave—if we may make use of that term to designate the place of refuge of our friends. Martin drew his hand back quickly, and seemed but little disposed to desert his warm bed.

"This is foolishness!" he muttered to himself after a little while. "We must go out, if we want to find the Dolphin, and therefore let us be quick about it."

With renewed zeal he resumed his interrupted work, and in a minute thereafter sprang out, and Leo followed him quickly.

The transition from the absolute darkness that reigned in their place of refuge, to the clear light of the sun, which was reflected from a boundless expanse of dazzling snow, was so sudden, that it was some time before they could use their eyes. At length, when they opened them, they saw nothing on all sides but a wide expanse of snow, and back of all

were the jagged icy peaks of Spitzbergen, standing out in the clear atmosphere like enormous crystals. The ice-berg, through whose ravine they had found their way to their place of refuge, had entirely disappeared, and they could discover only a narrow strip of sea in the far South. The whole space between them and it was filled with immense sheets of ice, covered with snow, and separate small ice-bergs, that had been somewhat forced together by the violence of the storm. The severe cold had bound the separate sheets of ice together into one solid, compact mass, and the snow was spread over it like a dazzling white cloth.

"Father in Heaven protect us!" exclaimed the honest pilot, after he had stood staring for a long time in blank amazement. "What has become of the Dolphin? If the storm has driven her to the South, then we are undoubtedly lost!"

"That would be awful!" said Leo, anxiously. "Oh my poor mother! She will

weep her eyes out, if she is compelled to consider me as lost. But no, Martin, we mustn't give up hope. If Elshöft succeeded in getting on board, then Captain Bertram will know that we are alive, and will wait for our return. We must cross the ice-field and go to the sea."

Martin shook his head sadly. "It is impossible," he said. "Perfectly impossible, to walk over this field, where, with every step, you will sink knee-deep in the snow. It would take days to reach the sea. No, give up that thought, my lad! Before we made half the distance, we should sink from exhaustion, and die from hunger or cold. We mustn't hope that Captain Bertram is waiting for us. The Northern Winter is here, and every minute that the Captain delays, may bring destruction to his vessel and her crew. God is our only hope and support in our extremity! Nothing is left for us but to rally all the courage, strength and perseverance possible, so as to be able to endure the terrors of the Winter, which now

threatens us. We are prisoners, my poor lad, and there is no hope of release, before next Summer from our boundless, cheerless prison. God help us! It is a hard trial that our heavenly Father has laid upon us!"

The brave pilot looked dejectedly about him, while Leo wrung his hands in despair. But he bewailed his own fate less than that of his poor mother, who loved him so tenderly, and would be so greatly distressed when the Dolphin returned without bringing her son to her arms. He burst into tears, as he imagined her grief and wept aloud. Martin looked at him with deep compassion.

"Yes, yes, my poor fellow, you have a right to weep," he said. "God only knows what a terrible fate is before us, and whether we shall be able to endure this Winter with its long, long night, its severe cold and its manifold privations. But I pledge myself, my lad, to take care of you, as a father would of his child, and may my distress be doubled, if I don't

protect you with all my strength from the worst.

"Only cheer up, cheer up, my dear boy. We need not cast away all hope. With strength and perseverance, man can overcome many a difficulty which would conquer him, if he had a cowardly heart. In consequence of my silly anxiety for the chase, you have been brought to this terrible situation; but my experience and my good will, shall at least protect you from the worst consequences. If I were fully satisfied that that fellow Elshöft was as great a rascal as his namesake in Bremen, then this misfortune would be intolerable; but who dare imagine such vile wickedness? To leave friends and comrades in danger, to deliver them up to an almost certain death, while it was still possible to save themfy! this is infamous!"

"But he would have exposed his own life, if he had wished to save us," said Leo, apologetically.

"What are you saying, my lad?

Would you have acted so, had you been in his place? Certainly not. No, indeed, nor I either. This circumstance alone is enough to condemn the fellow. Well! the Judge above will punish him for his misdeeds when his hour comes. But come now, Leo! The fellow is not worth enough, to put us out of humor on his account. Let us now rather busy ourselves in seeking a place, where protected from the north and east winds, we may make our winter quarters. Don't grieve, lad! We shall certainly have months of severe trial, but they will at last pass away."

"But shouldn't we make an effort at least to get back to the Dolphin?" inquired Leo. "Let us climb that hill, Martin. It is not too high for us, and then, if our ship is in the neighborhood, we can certainly see it from the summit."

"Useless, perfectly useless, Leo. I know it, but you shall have your way," replied the pilot, at the same time going in the direction of the hill indicated.

After a fatiguing travel of half an hour,

the base of the hill was reached, and Martin was about undertaking the ascent on the side which was the least steep when a shout from Leo caused him to pause.

"What's this, Martin?" he asked, pointing to a great, black mass that projected a little above the snow.

"What could it be?" replied Martin.

"A wreck of a ship which the wind has driven this way, and a mighty wave has tossed up on the ice. You can see plainly, in spite of the ice, that we are here close by the sea. Let us examine it after we have satisfied ourselves that nothing more is to be hoped from the Dolphin."

The two sailors, although accustomed to climbing, were obliged to labor very hard in making the ascent. After many futile efforts, they succeeded at length in reaching the summit, and looked down, from it, upon the narrow strip of open sea which was visible. For a little while Leo thought he saw a sail, and pointed it out to Martin. The latter soon showed him

that he was deceived, having taken a moving ice-berg for a sail. The Dolphin had disappeared, and was probably sailing far away from the point that was visible to our friends.

Once more Leo's heart was convulsed with anguish arising from disappointed hope. Then finally he collected all his energies, and said:

"Well, so be it! What God does, is well done! Let us, whom He has just preserved from death during the perils of the storm, not murmur in the least at His dispensations! Our hearts are as wax in His hands; and as steel also, if He gives them strength. Has not our Saviour said: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden,' and 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name He will give it to you?' Let us then, trusting in His guardian care through Christ's love for us, ask the Lord to be our tower of strength in this time of trouble.

"My poor mother will find consolation and comfort in hope, resting upon His providence and love. And Martin, let us be strong in the confident belief that it is God's will that has banished us to these barren coasts! With such Christian faith one can bear all things. Trust in God and hope in His merciful assistance in our hour of need, through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Let this be the staff upon which we lean!"

"Amen! so be it, my good boy," replied Martin, very much moved and affected. "If you, a weak lad, do not despair in our hour of distress, then must I, a hardy old sailor, stand my ground also. But let us get away from here, for the day will hardly last more than an hour, and we must do a great deal before night sets in. Let us first examine the wreck that you have discovered. If it can be of no other use, it will answer at least to warm the snow hut, which we must build to protect ourselves against the cold."

The two hermits, for so they might properly be called, as they were cut off from all habitable lands, and were compelled to live solitary and doleful lives in a wild solitude, hurried down the hill and reached its base in a few minutes; finding the descent much easier and more quickly made than the ascent. They soon reached the supposed wreck, and with their hands and feet pushed away on one side the snow in which it was buried.

"Ha! what's this?" cried Martin, suddenly, pausing in his work. "A piece of a fur! How did it get here? But we shall soon find more about it, for I begin now to see that this isn't a wreck but a boat in very good condition. Quick, Leo, let us find out all about it before nightfall."

The snow was now pushed aside with redoubled zeal, and the work had one good effect at least, in keeping Martin and Leo from feeling the intense cold that prevailed. Their hands, which were at first numb and stiff, glowed like fire, and drops of perspiration rolled from their foreheads.

"This is capital exercise!" said Leo, resting a moment to take breath.

"Certainly!" replied Martin. "And exercise in the open air is the only means left us to protect ourselves against the effects of a temperature, in comparison with which the present is only the mild frost of an autumn evening. But look here, Leo, if I were not fully satisfied that that rascally Elshöft had fled with our boat, I should be certain this was ours."

"It looks astonishingly like it," said Leo.

"But all the boats of the whale fishers are as much alike as eggs. I believe that we can get rid of the rest of the snow by turning the boat over."

"Not yet—we must first make an excavation alongside of it, so that we can turn it over more easily. Only help me, it can soon be done."

They quickly made the excavation, and then, using all their strength, they raised up the boat on one side. The heavy boat yielded to their efforts, tottered, and at length fell, keel downwards, by the force of its own weight, into the excavation.

An exclamation of extreme surprise burst simultaneously from the lips of the two friends; for, in the space which the boat had covered, there was now seen a man's body stretched out on the ice partly covered up in the fur! And they recognized it as the faithless Elshöft, who had so shamefully deserted them in their hour of danger. He was pale and stiff, and the spirit to all appearances had left the body.

"See how the hand of God has taken the rascal away, in the midst of his sins!" said Martin, breaking the silence that followed this unlooked for discovery. "God is just! That fellow, renouncing all truth and greatness of soul, sought flight, and the Lord hurled him back upon this ice, to give us a sign that He would be mindful of us in our extremity. Yes, the Lord is just, and no evil doer can escape His chastening arm." "But, Martin, there may be still some life in the unfortunate man," said Leo. "Let us try to save him!"

"Not I. My hand shall not touch him, whom the lightning of God's wrath has visited!" replied the honest, but indignant old Pilot, forgetting, for the time, the mercy that the Lord had just shown him, in sparing his own life. "Let his corpse lie there in the open air as food for the bears and foxes! I shall have nothing to do with him."

"Oh Martin—suppose he returned of his own free will to this wild waste in order to save us, to bring us assistance, or even to share in good faith our misfortune?" cried out Leo, nobly. "Our Lord commands us to love even our enemies, and this is likely not an enemy, but possibly a good, faithful comrade!"

Martin made no answer to these words, but turned his back upon his young friend. Leo took hold of the unfortunate man quickly, rubbed his hands and face with snow, continuing his exertions until a gentle sigh escaped from the lips of the benumbed man.

"He lives, Martin! he lives!" he shouted aloud. "For God's sake lend me your assistance. If we leave him here helpless, we shall be murderers in the sight of God and before the bar of our consciences."

Leo now redoubled his efforts, and noticed with great satisfaction that his words had not been said without making an impression upon Martin. The old Pilot drew near reluctantly, it is true, and with a dissatisfied expression of face, and assisted in rescuing from the bonds of death an enemy, for in this light he looked upon Elshöft now. As soon as he was actively engaged, the bitterness disappeared from his brave heart, and its icy walls melted, like the snow with which he was rubbing his stiff limbs. His stern, dark countenance cleared up, his firmly closed lips relaxed into a smile, and after a few minutes he said:

"He is surely returning to his senses!

Well, if it is God's will that the knave should return to life in order that he may repent of, and atone for, his sins, how dare I prevent it? See there, Leo, he opens his eyes! Let us be lively! Rub his breast well, and I will attend to his temples. Hurrah! There he lives again!"

In fact, under the hands of the good Samaritans, Conrad Elshöft was gradually restored to consciousness. Warmth and feeling of life returned to his stiffened limbs; he opened his eyes, stretched himself like a man who awakes from a long profound slumber, and finally opened his lips with the question: "Oh Lord, where am I?"

"Well, you are not exactly in a fourpost bedstead with silk curtains," answered Martin, "but you have been saved for this time, I believe, and that is more than I thought you would be ten minutes ago. God grant that this may be a blessing, fellow, to you, and that you may repent and become a better man! But I will lecture you no further now; I reserve that for a more suitable occasion. Drink this!"

He applied to the lips of the fainting man a flask, that he had discovered along with some other articles in the boat, and poured some of the liquor into his mouth. Conrad soon came more fully to himself. Fresh vital energy flowed through his stiffened limbs, and he got up on his feet.

"Martin—Leo—do I owe my life to you two?" he stammered, turning his eye from one to the other and gasping for breath. "Oh Lord, this have I not deserved from them!"

"Certainly not!" blustered out the old pilot, "and it was my idea that you should continue to lie there until the Resurrection trumpet should awake you, but Leo, the brave lad, sprang to your help and—well—I too was obliged to help you. But if you want to thank anybody, turn to Leo, for I have had, in fact, but little to do with the whole work of your restoration."

While the old pilot was speaking these

hard words, even then his eyes flashed with joy at the restoration of Conrad, and probably he conceived a greater liking for him than he had ever had before. It is always so in life, that we love those most to whom we have unselfishly done the most good; and when the Lord says: love your enemies, He implies that we should do them good out of a kind spirit, whence love itself will flow.

Elshöft now heard but few of Martin's words, and but half-understood the meaning of these. His troubled face exhibited, in turns, burning redness and corpse-like paleness, whilst he gazed at Leo with a strange expression in his eye. Then he suddenly seized the lad's hand, pressed it convulsively in his own, and said in a half-smothered voice, while tears hot and heavy rolled down his cheeks: "I thank you, noble-hearted friend, I thank you! Yes, and I promise, by God's assistance, that I will recompense you for the injury done to you and yours! O heavenly

Father, this is a call from Thee to repentance and a better life!"

Leo smiled pleasantly, and returned the grasp of Conrad's hand kindly, while Martin blustered out again with his rough voice:

"Well! Heaven grant it, and strengthen you in your good resolutions! It was a rascally trick—to think of leaving us helpless upon this island. A real, genuine, unmitigated, rascally trick! But your penitence atones for it, and your best penance is to avoid sin hereafter. Conduct yourself uprightly so long as we shall be obliged to remain upon this island, and there shall be no further reference made to the affair. No one who has a right heart betrays a good comrade, and in fact, good companionship is very essential now, as a winter in Spitzbergen isn't a pleasure party. But come along now, if you have strength enough! The sun has already set, and we must go back to our old quarters, to keep our noses and ears from being frozen

during the night. The wind blows sharp from the north, and cuts like a knife."

Conrad stood up with difficulty, and tried, with the aid of Martin and Leo, to drag himself along. But he was still too weak to make such great exertion, and he sank down before he had taken twenty steps.

"Only leave me here, friends!" he entreated, with feeble voice. "Wrap me up in the skin, and turn the boat over me, and I shall get along very well until tomorrow morning.

Martin and Leo looked at him, and the former shrugged his shoulders.

"Hum! the boat, in fact, is just as good as the bear-skin, especially since we have been so lucky as to find the wolf-skin for a covering," he said, after a little reflection. "If we had only the bear's cub with us! The little fellow is as good as a common stove. You remain here, Leo, and wrap the half-frozen fellow up warmly. I will go over for the young bear; I will get a roast from the old one, and her skin,

and bring them all back with me. We have not eaten anything for more than four and twenty hours, and a piece of meat will not be objectionable to any one."

Leo made some objections to this arrangement, wishing to go himself and leave Conrad in Martin's care, but the latter paid no attention to his objections, and without further remark started for their previous quarters. In the meanwhile, Leo brought Conrad, who was completely exhausted, to the boat, wrapped him up carefully in the wolf-skin and prepared a place for him in the inside of the boat, so that he might be protected from the sharp, cutting wind. Conrad soon fell into a deep sleep, and Leo himself felt very much fatigued. He dug a hole in the snow, wrapped a skin around him, and waited impatiently for the return of Martin.

After two hours had passed away he came back. The young bear had been tied to a small rope, and was driven before

him as if it were a sheep or goat. Behind him he dragged the skin of the old bear, in which he had wrapped one of its hams, and in his hand he carried a rifle which had been dug out of the snow by the little bear. He breathed freely and easily, when he threw his load into the boat, for the heavy weight and his tiresome walk through snow three feet deep, had been very exhausting.

"That's done!" he said. "Now, Leo, first of all, let us lift the boat over, and then build a good fire to roast our meat. In an hour all can be done, and after that our sleep will be all the sweeter to us. Where did you put that fellow—Conrad?"

"He is asleep!" replied Leo, pointing him out. "The poor fellow is almost dead with fatigue."

"Well, let him sleep until we can put a piece of roasted bear-meat under his nose," said Martin, immediately making preparations for kindling a fire. A pair of useless oars, which had been found in the boat, were broken up and, by the aid of a handful of tarred oakum and some gunpowder, the red tongued flames were soon made to shoot forth. The iron ramrod of the rifle served as a spit. Martin cut some choice slices from the bear-ham, strung them on the ramrod, and roasted them as nicely as though he had always followed the business of cook. Leo assisted him in silence, and Martin made but few remarks about their sleeping comrade, giving his opinion as to the reasons that might have impelled him to take to flight and leave his companions in trouble.

"It was fear, Leo, fear and cowardice!" he said. "When he saw the storm and the snow blowing about him, his heart failed, and he rushed off to reach the Dolphin in safety. It may be that he supposed we had been killed in the bearfight, and that his treachery would escape suspicion if he could only reach the vessel. But Heaven did not suffer him to reap the fruits of his knavery. A tornado

probably seized him, and hurled him back to the place he had just left. Now let us see how he will act hereafter. If he proves to be only a tolerably good fellow, we will not hereafter reproach him with his bad conduct."

It did not occur to the honest pilot that Elshöft might have had still other reasons for his conduct; he didn't think that Conrad was in some way related to the Elshöft, who had without remorse swindled Leo's mother, and had been, through his unrighteous persecution, the direct cause that obliged Leo to spend a terrible winter, and probably even longer, on the inhospitable shores of Spitzbergen. Leo also attributed Conrad's base flight to the desire alone of saving his own life, and from the natural inclination of his heart to forgiveness, readily pardoned a cowardice, for which his comrade had nearly paid with his life.

When the meat was cooked, Conrad was aroused, and the three men, thus cut off from the habitable world, then ate

their supper of simple but nourishing food. After this, with united strength, they tilted the boat over again, crept under it, wrapped themselves in the skins, took the cub in with them after having given him his share of the supper, and slept without the slightest disturbance, through the whole night, until the following morning, which was to awaken them to fresh troubles and hardships.





CHAPTER X.

THE HERMITS.

HE sun was not yet above the horizon, although the light of his refracted rays had already driven away the darkness of the night, when Martin aroused his sleeping comrades with a loud shout. He knew better than they that much was to be done in order that they might be able to defy successfully the severity of the winter. Old Martin was not the man to omit any necessary precaution, through carelessness or indolence.

He made his comrades confess the necessity of securing a safe place of lodgings. He proposed that, with their united energies, they should build a snow-hut, such as the Greenlanders are in the habit of

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using during the severity of their Winters. Leo and Conrad signified their willingness to go to work at once.

Conrad mentioned, however, that while living in Holland, where he was employed as a sailor on a merchant-man, he had heard it said that an attempt had been made, some years before, by the Dutch whale fishers, to pass their Winters in Spitzbergen, and that they had erected for this purpose, a strong house of heavy timbers. This was probably still in good condition, and habitable, although it had been deserted for years. He proposed that they should make a search for this house, which would undoubtedly furnish them better protection than a hut made of snow and ice.

"That would be excellent," replied Leo, quickly, "but where shall we find the hut? Spitzbergen is a large place, and before we could finish an examination of all portions of the island, we might die of hunger or cold."

After a short consultation it was re-

solved to institute a careful search along the south coast of Spitzbergen, as in all probability the house would be found there, if still in existence.

"Let us see!" said old Martin. the Hollanders needed such a house, they must have built it undoubtedly at a point, where they might easily recognize a vessel sailing this way in Summer, and where also they would be protected at the same time, from the terrible Northern and North-eastern storms in Winter. They could only accomplish this by placing the house at the foot of a mountain which would be as near as possible to the coast. In looking around, we see two such mountains, one on the right, and the other on the left, for that mountain in the background is so far from the coast, that it would have been folly to have built at its foot.

"Now you see, children, my plan was to build our snow hut under the rocky wall on the right, which bids defiance to any storm from the North, while the craggy projection gives full protection against an East wind. That location is undoubtedly the best on the South side of the island, and I shall be greatly deceived, if the prudent Hollanders did not come to the same conclusion. If they built a house, they must have leaned it against that rocky wall. Now, my proposition is to go there and examine the spot.

"If we find the house—good, it will be a blessing from God, for which we must thank Him upon our knees; if we don't find it, we will seek no further, for I am firmly convinced, there could be none anywhere else along the coast. We shall have lost no time in our search, for we can begin our own hut without delay. It may be small and defective, but it will serve at least to protect us from the worst. Forward, my lads!"

The reasons, advanced by Martin, were so clear and convincing, that neither Leo nor Conrad objected, and without further remark they all started off in the direc-

tion indicated by Martin. They reached the foot of the rocks, whose steep walls extended to the snow-covered summit, in half an hour, and began their search in silence. Martin examined the angle made by the wall and the craggy projection, but his search was in vain. Leo and Conrad, searching along the wall, found nothing but piles of snow, which the wind had heaped up into little hills, and then returned to Martin.

"Don't be down-hearted, my lads!" said the latter, consoling them. "I didn't believe in the existence of the house from the first, because the Hollanders are very frugal and painstaking, and if the house had been worth anything, they would have taken it away. Let us give up that idea; and now help me to push the snow on one side, so that we may get a solid foundation for our own house. This is the most protected spot on the whole coast, and we must not suffer it to be unoccupied. Briskly to work, lads! In

work we will best forget all unnecessary sorrow and thoughts."

As they had previously determined that a kind of foundation for the house must be dug out of the snow, our three adventurers had brought the oars along to answer the purpose of spades and shovels. Notwithstanding their disappointed hopes, they proceeded quietly to their work, and in the course of an hour they had made quite a large clearing away of the snow. Still they had not reached solid foundation, and Martin was about to begin his contemplated structure upon a seemingly thick crust of ice, when it occurred to him that he ought to test its strength by a powerful blow with his He struck it heavily—the ice cracked, split, gave way under the feet of the stout sailor, and the unfortunate man with a loud shriek disappeared.

"Merciful Father, protect us! Oh Martin!" cried out Leo, falling as pale as death upon his knees and looking down into the black abyss, that had so suddenly swallowed up his only friend. While he lay there, clasping his hands together in despair, stiff, pale and motionless as a stone statue, Conrad stood behind him with knit brows, colorless cheeks and lips, his dark shining eyes fixed upon Leo with an incomprehensible expression. Then he took a step forward with raised hands, and muttered in a low tone and with a hollow, tremulous voice: "The grave conceals everything, and no voice could be heard from this abyss. Your honor before the world, father, would be saved if he should disappear like his friend!"

His hand moved towards Leo,—a touch, a push and—all would be over. Then Leo, who had no suspicion of the dark, dreadful thoughts that were raging in Conrad's excited brain, could not have made the slightest resistance. His life seemed to hang upon a thread. Suddenly Conrad drew back terror-stricken, and threw himself down in the snow, concealing his face in his hands, and sobbed out: "No, no, I dare not! Depart from me,

thou tempter! O Lord, in Thy mercy, save me from myself! For Christ's sake deliver me not into the power of the devil! No, no, let not these hands destroy the preserver of my own life!"

Conrad's voice died away in a convulsive sob, and his whole body trembled like the young foliage of the aspen among the whispers of the evening breeze.

Leo did not observe him,—indeed he had not heard the words which Conrad had uttered aloud. He remained bowing down over the abyss, in whose depths Martin lay buried, and groaned in anguish as great tears ran down his pale cheeks.

"Martin! Oh Martin!" he screamed.

"Oh Lord have mercy upon me, and give me back my lost friend! Martin! Martin! do you hear me?"

All was quiet. No friendly voice replied to his wild cry of despair, and Leo threw himself back again upon the ice and wept bitterly. He had heard in his younger days that there were deep ravines

and fissures in the ice,—often hidden over by thin deceptive coverings of snow which brought certain destruction to the luckless person whose careless feet stepped upon them. Such a fissure he believed this to be, into which Martin had plunged, and his heart seemed wholly shattered and crushed by the loss he had so unexpectedly met.

In the meantime Conrad had arisen, and with pallid, but composed countenance, approached the weeping Leo.

"Up, my lad!" he said to him. "Don't give way to grief! Grieving and wringing hands will accomplish nothing. We must try to rescue Martin!"

"To rescue Martin!" exclaimed Leo, springing up from the ice. "Ha, Conrad, you give me life again! Do you believe that it is possible to rescue him?"

"I hope so at least!" replied Conrad.

"The fissure is probably not very deep, and if we work diligently we may be able to dig down where Martin is! Leo, let us at least try it."

With frantic haste Leo seized an oar, and, without uttering a syllable in reply, began to work. Snow and ice were speedily thrown aside, when suddenly the lad paused as if he were paralyzed, clenched his teeth, and held his breath.

"Leo! Conrad! Halloo, my lads, are you still up there?" thus shouted a voice from below, which was answered by an exclamation of joy from Leo.

"He lives! Heavenly Father, I thank Thee. Martin lives!" he cried, and his eyes were radiant with joy, as he directed a look of unutterable thankfulness towards the sky. "Martin, are you unhurt? How can we best help you?"

"I feel a little bit skinned and bruised," was the answer from below—"but my bones anyhow have not been broken by the fall, and my consciousness has returned. I feel as if I had recovered from a swoon. Have I lain here long?"

"Not long. Not more than five or ten minutes," replied Leo. "But how can we help you, Martin? Shall I throw you down a rope, or shall we, Conrad and I, remove the ice at the side and come to you?"

"Neither, my lad," replied Martin.

"Go away from the opening, so that some light may fall into my prison. At present I find myself very well, only I can't make out what sort of a place this is."

Leo stepped back, and awaited patiently further instructions from Martin. "Oh Conrad!" he said to the latter, "what a favor the Lord has granted us in preserving our honest, faithful friend! Without him, without his experience and assistance, we should certainly die in this barren region, and would never see our homes again."

"Yes, Leo! I also thank God from the very bottom of my heart!" replied Conrad. "You can't know how much—but indeed God has saved me as well as yourself during these terrible minutes. He has saved you without your being aware of it. But I here solemnly promise, by God's assistance, that no temptation shall

hereafter overcome me, and that my hands and conscience shall henceforth be free from wicked deeds, if I lose all for it."

"What are you talking about? What have you done, Conrad?" asked Leo, who, quite perplexed, could not penetrate the obscure meaning of his companion's words. "What has led you into temptation?"

"Sin, my good comrade, sin!" answered Conrad. "But silence now. At another time you shall know all, and then, I hope, you will pardon me, when you are convinced that I mean to act honorably and uprightly by you. Silence now! I hear Martin's voice again."

In fact the sound came from below, "Conrad! Leo!" and the two lads drew near the opening quickly.

"What's the matter, Martin?" asked

"Listen lads," shouted the Pilot in reply, "I believe that I have actually found the house that Conrad has been talking about. At least I find myself sur-

rounded by walls made of stout timbers, and, as far as I can tell by the dim light that penetrates my prison, everything is in good order. Ha! here is a door also—perhaps I can open it."

They now heard a dull pushing and

shaking below, but it soon ceased.

"It can't be done!" cried Martin. "It only opens outwards, and the snow against it keeps me from getting out. There's no question about it, that this is the Hollanders' house, and the discovery is worth a few bumps and blue spots. It seems to be a solid structure, and I must have fallen down the chimney!

"Listen now. Measure ten paces in a southwesterly direction. Then dig and shovel away as though your lives depended on it. When you get deep enough you will be right against the door, and then we will break it open. I will try in the meantime what I can do below here. Throw me down an oar."

This was done forthwith, and Conrad and Leo began to make their excavation

at the spot indicated by Martin. They had many difficulties indeed to overcome, sometimes they encountered loose masses of snow, and then solid masses of ice, which offered serious resistance to their oars. With zealous perseverance, they overcame every obstacle finally, and after working for two hours, they found to their great joy, that they were quite near the object they were aiming at. A dull, continuous knocking was heard on the side where they supposed the entrance of the house to be, and this satisfied them that Martin was working as eagerly as they for his liberation.

"We must now dig on that side, since we are deep enough," said Conrad. "Dig away with me, Leo."

"No, no!" replied Leo, "the house was certainly not built upon the snow, and hence it is useless to work at the side before we reach the solid earth."

Conrad acknowledged the strength of the reasoning, and they continued to make the excavation deeper. In a few minutes Leo stood upon the solid, frozen ground, and saw that his supposition had been correct.

"Now to the right!" he shouted.

"The wall that separates us from our friend can't be more than a foot thick."

They undermined the wall of snow and ice in the hope that it would fall from its own weight, and their efforts were successful, the walls began to shake; some portions were falling. The two lads had scarcely time to spring back so as to avoid being buried under the mass, when the whole started and fell. A door, one foot in thickness, burst open, having at last yielded to Martin's powerful strength.

Some seconds elapsed before the reunited friends could see each other, for the loose snow was flying around, covering them all as with a thick cloud. When this cleared away, the two lads and Martin stood opposite each other alive and well, and with a cry of joy Leo sank into the arms of his noble friend. Conrad remained quietly standing alongside of, and looking with moistened eyes at, his companion.

"O Lord God!" he said in a low tone of voice, "how can I thank Thee enough for allowing me to enjoy this moment? Now I am full of joy—but what terrible qualms of conscience would be mine, had I yielded to the temptation! Grant, O heavenly Father, for Jesus' sake, that wicked thoughts may no longer find a home in my breast!"

"Well, Conrad, are you not glad that we have found each other again?" said Martin, interrupting his companion's

soliloquy.

"From my heart I am glad!" replied Conrad, approaching to shake Martin's friendly hand extended to him. "Yes, indeed, I am as glad as though I myself had been snatched from death."

"Well, my lad, in the end we have found you a trusty comrade, although I was inclined to doubt it," said Martin, slapping Conrad's shoulder affectionately. "Your true zeal has atoned for your little piece of rascality, and we shall never more refer to the fact that you deserted us when danger threatened. Let the story be forgotten and buried, and we will live together as trusty friends, until next Summer brings us home.

"Be of good courage, my lads! Now that we have discovered this glorious house, I don't fear the winter any more, and with God's assistance, we shall be enabled to endure it. The house is indeed an excellent discovery; and now, as the daylight is shining brightly in it, let's examine it closely."

The three hermits passed over the pile of snow, through the open door, into the house, and a brief but thorough examination satisfied them that they could not have found a more convenient and suitable place for their protection. The whole house, although it had been deserted for several years, was in excellent condition, inasmuch as the snow, which a series of Northern winters had deposited upon and around it, had been its very best protec-

tion against the destructive influences of the weather.

They found a stove inside, which was very well arranged for roasting and boiling, and in a bin by its side a considerable quantity of coal and wood, which, beyond a doubt, the Hollanders, following the dictates of philanthropy, had left there.

In other respects, the house was rather empty. A rough table, evidently made from some pieces of ship lumber, and two chairs quite as rudely put together, were also found. In one of the sides of the room there was a fire-place opening into the chimney through which Martin had the fortunate fall. It had been used for smoking meat and fish, as some of its arrangements showed. Martin remarked that they could also use it for the same purpose, as they owned a large quantity of bear-meat fit for smoking. It was immediately resolved to bring the remaining portion of the bear to the house, to cut it into suitable pieces, and smoke them. It was also resolved to kill the cub, because

they wouldn't have too large a store of provisions laid up for the long severe winter; and finally, that the boat should be brought near to the house in order to use it for fuel, if necessary.

Martin then kindled a fire in the stove, and, with the view of keeping out the penetrating cold, closed the fire-place with a board fitted to it, which was unexpectedly discovered, took an iron pot which he filled with snow and placed upon the stove, and then brought the rest of the bear-meat, to the house with the assistance of the other two. A piece of the meat was put in the pot, and it was boiling merrily, when Martin betook himself without delay to the boat to kill the cub.

When he returned from his merciless but necessary work, the soup and the bear-meat were ready, and our three hermits, after asking God's blessing, ate their frugal, but strengthening meal with feelings of heartfelt gratitude to God; whose aid had been so manifestly extended to

them throughout the day. A very comfortable warmth prevailed in the room; and Martin said, smiling, "that if their circumstances should continue to be as good, many a poor fellow at home, who had neither fire in his stove, nor bear-meat in his smoke-house, would be inclined to change places with them."

"But," he added seriously, "In truth we do not know what hardships and severe trials we may yet be obliged to encounter. When the winter breaks upon us in all its rigor, there are few who would be willing to partake of our lot."

"Whatever may come let us not despair," said Leo. "God's help will not fail us,—the blessing that my mother sent after me makes me confident of this. Oh Martin! how unhappy should I now be, if I were obliged to suffer the reproaches of my own conscience, as well as the physical trials that fall to our lot! Indeed it was a blessed idea of my brother's, to

make the flag a means of communication from my mother to me!"

"Yes, it was an excellent idea!" said Martin. "A mother's blessing builds her children's houses, and I believe that your mother's blessing cleared the way to this house. Let us rest still more upon its efficacy, and the assistance of our heavenly Father, without whose will not a sparrow falls to the ground!"

Conrad said nothing, but, before he closed his eyes, he asked God's assistance in keeping his vow nevermore to turn from the path of duty, and muttered gently to himself: "If we ever get back to Bremen, I will show both Martin and Leo, that a penitent heart, bent on repairing evil, beats in my breast. You have saved my life, Leo; the future will show that you have not saved an ingrate!"





CHAPTER XI.

CAPTAIN BERTRAM.

NDEED it was a wearisome, sad and perilous life that our adventurers passed in their isolation upon the barren island of Spitzbergen. Their days, or rather their nights, were passed away in fatiguing sameness. Occasionally a hunt for bears, seals and reindeer, which sometimes made their appearance, introduced a little variety.

The remainder of the season was devoted to excursions about the island, and to the collection of provisions and watercresses, which could be found at certain places under the snow. They had fortunately recovered their rifles, and there was a sufficient quantity of powder and

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ball, to remove all fear for want of ammunition, in the boat which they had placed alongside of their house. Such a want would have been very serious, inasmuch as they were obliged to depend for their food almost entirely upon the results of the chase. Martin considered the necessity for daily hunting excursions a very fortunate circumstance.

"For," said he, "if we were abundantly supplied with provisions, we should become too slothful and lazy to take exercise in the open air, while this protracted daily exercise will alone keep our limbs supple, and our health in good condition."

When there was no wild game, our friends carefully examined the shores for drift-wood and the timbers of wrecked vessels with the view of increasing their stock of fuel as much as possible. They found enough of this, although they were often obliged to consume much strength in getting it out of the snow. They carried many a load on their backs to the

house, and stored it in the bin, where they had found the supply of coal.

"The more wood we have, so much the better for us," Martin often said, when they were staggering under their burdens. "So far, we have experienced but little of the cold; after a little you will know what a polar Winter is, and we shall not have to wait long for it."

And true enough, with the beginning of October, the cold set in, and seemed to increase daily, until it became intensely severe. Although the house could be styled excellent, on account of its favorable location and admirable construction, and their stove was kept at a red heat, still they were hardly able to make the little room comfortably warm. The cold could be tolerated only in the immediate neighborhood of the stove, and notwithstanding this was kept hot day and night, the cold air crept in so keenly through every little crack in the walls, that liquids not standing near the fire were always covered with a layer of ice an inch thick.

If the door was open only for a second, the atmosphere of the room would be so chilled, that its moisture was converted into snow-flakes, which would fall to the floor.

Of course it was still worse without. The moisture of the breath was frozen as soon as it came into contact with the air, and their limbs required to be thickly covered with skins if they were exposed for any time to the effects of the penetrating cold. In their excursions they were obliged to keep closely together, so that one might look out for the other, whether his nose or ears were frozen, which was shown by the waxen-white color they assumed. The unfortunate person would not be conscious of the effect, until assistance would be too late. When the stiffened part, however, was briskly rubbed with a few handsful of snow, relief and safety were secured.

The condition of our friends became still worse when, about the middle of October, the Sun wholly disappeared not to return again for a long time. They bitterly lamented the absence of the cheering light of the great luminary, for which the lustre of the shining stars and the gloomy splendor of the Aurora Borealis were meagre substitutes. The cold was most severe in November, so that they were compelled to remain in the house covered up in the skins of the animals they had killed, lying with their feet towards the red hot stove, and close together, in order to preserve their bodily warmth in the best manner.

It was hardly possible then to live out of doors, and hunting was not to be thought of. In order not to give up all exercise, they would run in front of the house for half an hour, and then quickly return, as neither their active exercise nor their warm fur coverings were sufficient to protect them from the cold for a longer period. It was fortunate for them that they had laid up food and fuel in proper season, as they would have otherwise perished from hunger and cold.

Meanwhile day after day passed away,

the weather became somewhat milder, and about the end of January, their hearts were rejoiced, not by the appearance of the Sun himself, but by a species of twilight, that foretold the return of the great luminary. Four weeks later, a small portion of his disk appeared above the horizon, and was greeted by our friends with shouts of joy, and silent prayers of thankfulness. They began to hunt again in March, and to renew their stock of provisions. They were then so fortunate as to kill another polar bear and some seals. Being now supplied with provisions, they were able to look out for the arrival of the vessels, which would undoubtedly sail for the whaling waters at the beginning of the season. The Lord had preserved them in good health, notwithstanding all their hardships and perils.

Conrad distinguished himself by his zeal, whenever an opportunity offered, and he succeeded, once during a hunt, in saving the life he had formerly wished to

take. He rescued Leo from the grasp of a bear that had seized him in its fatal embrace. And from that time forth Martin and Leo set great store by him.

April passed away, and May followed; the air became milder; the immense ice-bergs, which covered the sea-shore, fell to pieces, and were carried away by wind and wave; the broad expanse of water lay open before their eyes, and they gazed longingly, day by day out upon the sea, trying to discover a sail, which might bring them deliverance from their long captivity.

They were often greatly rejoiced when a small white cloud appeared above the distant horizon, looking exactly like the outstretched canvass of a ship, and just as often their joy was turned into sadness, when they found their hopes were vain. Birds came in great flocks to build their nests along the shore. The sea swarmed with its inhabitants, rejoicing in the mildness of the season. Whales and dolphins sported in the waters. But no vessel could be seen, no flag, no streamers fluttering in the breeze.

"They think us dead!" said Leo, halfaloud. "No one asks after us, and the horror of a long, gloomy winter, once more threatens us. Oh my poor mother!"

"Patience!" said Martin, consolingly. "Captain Bertram is a man of honor, and will certainly make search for us. A thousand circumstances may have delayed the passage of a vessel through the Arctic sea, and besides, it is still very early in the year. We can scarcely count upon his appearance before the middle of June."

Fresh hopes! Fresh fears. A ship appeared above the horizon. It was a ship, actually a ship. It could not possibly be a deception, and our friends wept with delight, and embraced each other in the excess of their joy. But alas! the ship disappeared again in the distance, and their joy was turned into sadness and sorrow.

"He will not come!" sighed Conrad and Leo.

"He will come," replied Martin, with unshaken confidence—"that is, if the Lord has spared his life. Captain Bertram will not desert us."

Again and again, they passed whole days by the shore, looking always in the distance, and awaiting with intense anxiety the friendly vessel. At last the evening of the fourteenth of June arrived, and Martin himself now shook his head sadly, as they returned to the house with disappointed hopes, as before.

"My lads," said he, before going to sleep, "the time has come when we must help ourselves. Our boat is in pretty good condition. Let us launch it upon the water to-morrow, and row out to the open sea. Further to the South there must be whaling-vessels at this time; with God's assistance, we can reach them without any disaster. I can't count upon Captain Bertram any longer, or conjecture the reasons which keep him from us.

What think you? Will you try the experiment?"

"Yes, we will!" replied Leo and Conrad. "We must make every effort for our release, as we could hardly endure a second Winter on these shores."

"Well then, God helping us, let it be so!" said Martin. "Hold yourselves in readiness for the morning."

When a man in great extremity has come to a decided conclusion, which he believes necessary and indispensable, his heart becomes light, and he looks trustingly forward to the future. Thus it was with our friends. The heavy burden of painful expectation, of comfortless hope, was removed from their hearts, and for the first time in many days they enjoyed a quiet, refreshing sleep.

About early dawn, Martin suddenly arose from his sleep. The sound of voices had disturbed him, and he thought that Leo or Conrad had been talking in their dreams. He lay down again. But scarcely had he closed his eyes, when he

heard the voices again, and this time there was no doubt but that there were strange voices outside of the house.

"Thanks be to Thee, our heavenly Father!" cried Martin, springing up in the ecstacy of joy. "Leo, Conrad, awake! Help has come in the night."

The two youths awoke, and were on their feet in a second. The door was suddenly opened, and, with the exclamation, "Heaven be thanked, here you are alive and well," Captain Bertram entered the room with a countenance radiant with joy.

Martin fell into the Captain's arms, Leo and Conrad laughed in the excess of indescribable happiness, which this surprise assured them, and a loud friendly hurrah was given by the boat's crew, who had rowed the Captain ashore, and had aided him in searching for the lost men.

Minutes passed before full hearts could find words to express the excess of their feelings. At last explanations and statements were made, and the Captain heard with astonishment the account of the adventures and sufferings of our hermits, whom the Lord had in mercy so happily preserved. Leo inquired, when he recovered his wits, first of all after his mother and brother. And his heart beat joyously, when he learned that both were perfectly well, and were unshaken in their hope of embracing their lost son and brother once more alive and well.

The Captain had strengthened their hope, because he believed that Martin's experience—if he had escaped the teeth and claws of the she bear—would contrive ways and means for the preservation of himself and his companions in misfortune through the Winter. The Captain further explained, as Martin had supposed, that his ship had been irresistibly driven to the South by the storm and waves, and that it would have been the greatest rashness in the world, to have attempted, at that season of the year, to return for the rescue of those left behind.

On his prosperous arrival in Bremen,

he had reported the unfortunate adventure to his employer, and expressed the belief that Martin, as well as Leo and Conrad, were still alive. Thereupon, Herr Melchior Bunkendorf had immediately ordered that as soon as navigation was open in the Spring, an attempt should be made to bring our friends from the island. They had begun the voyage about the end of March, and, but for adverse winds, would have arrived earlier. He had still something more to say to his young friend from Herr Liborius,that all were well at home, and the old villain Elshöft, had been incapacitated from doing them any further injury, as a higher Judge had summoned him before His infallible tribunal.

When Conrad heard his father's death announced, he grew red and white by turns, and turning away his face prevented any one observing his emotions. Moreover, neither Martin nor Leo had said anything about his attempt to save his own life in the boat after deserting

them, and no one was informed concerning this false step of Conrad, which would have covered him forever with disgrace and ignominy in the eyes of the rough but honest and noble-hearted sailors. Martin pressed his hand affectionately, and whispered to him: "Be quite at ease, Conrad! Everything done has been buried and forgotten, your brave and faithful conduct excepted, which has made us friends for all time!"

Conrad returned the pressure of Martin's hand, and answered him in a low tone of voice: "I thank you, father Martin! But you shall see, if we get back to Bremen safely, that you and Leo have no more faithful and reliable friend than Conrad Elshöft. I shall always remember this hour, Martin!"

While this conversation was taking place, Captain Bertram and his crew made arrangements to return to the Dolphin. Our friend's effects were carried on board. Martin left, however, a large supply of wood in the bin for the benefit of perhaps

some other unfortunate hermits. Captain Bertram ordered a few hundred weight of coal, and then all again betook themselves to the boat, and returned to the Dolphin.

Martin was a rough, stern, weather-beaten, old sea bear. But when he trod once more the planks of the good ship, from which he had been absent for so long and trying a time; when he looked once more upon the familiar objects which had become dear to him from long association; when he approached the wheel and grasped its spokes with his powerful hand, as though he was pressing the hand of an old friend after a painful separation,—then the feeling of happiness overpowered him, and tears, actually tears, rolled down his brown, furrowed cheeks.

Leo and Conrad also wept, but their tears were only manifestations of their happiness, and the offerings of gratitude which the rescued rendered to Heaven with peaceful and deeply-affected hearts. The Lord had marvellously preserved them, and had communicated to them His

richest blessings in the midst of their sorrow. That alone was worth a whole life
of thankfulness. But Leo was to find a
still greater manifestation of God's goodness. It was to be made clear to him
that an occurrence, which had kept him so
long from home, would turn out to be the
immediate cause of a happiness of which
he hadn't the slightest conception.

Thus we foolish, short-sighted mortals, often consider that a grievous misfortune which in fact is intended, according to the wise and inscrutable plan of God, to guide us to our true prosperity.

If the God of love and mercy imposes a burden upon us, it is for our own happiness to bear it.





CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

T was a glorious evening in September, when a vessel, with double-reefed sails, was slowly approaching the shore, opposite to a high point, from which a pretty little house, imbedded in grape-vines, looked down, pleasant and attractive. When the vessel was about a quarter of a mile from the beach, a boat was launched, and a sturdy lad, whose eyes sparkled with joy, leaped dexterously into it. An older man followed him, somewhat more slowly, and placed himself at the prow, while the younger took his place at the stern, grasped the oars with singular haste, and dipped them straightway into the water.

"A happy journey, and a happy meeting!" cried out a voice from the forward deck of the ship, to the men in the boat. "I hope to see you soon again, my children!"

"Certainly, Captain Bertram," replied the lad's comrade in the boat. "Before eight days pass around we will come to Bremen to draw our pay. Till then, good-by!"

A hurrah was sent from the vessel after the party leaving, the reefs were then loosened, and the Dolphin, with a favoring breeze, flew with the swiftness of the wind, in spite of its heavy lading, towards the mouth of the Weser.

The boat, whose crew will be recognized by our readers as old acquaintances, drew near the shore with steady strokes of the oars, and was steered precisely to the point, over which the little house stood. Soon the sand grated against the keel; Martin sprang out, fastened it to a stake, and extended his hand to his young friend, who had followed him quickly.

"Welcome, Leo, to the fatherland!"

he said, affectionately. "It is truly the blessing of God which has brought us safe and sound back again. What joy your mother will feel at your unexpected return!"

"Yes, indeed, Martin!" replied Leo, whose voice trembled with joyous excitement. "And Willy also. He is certainly at home, for there is the dear old boat, in which I have gone fishing so often, lying at the bank. Still I tremble. If mother is only alive and well!"

"Don't doubt it, my lad!" replied Martin confidently, as the two ascended the hill. "A few minutes more and you will rest on her bosom. Ah! there is the house already!"

Leo increased his speed; he breathed quickly, his cheeks burned, his eyes flashed, his heart beat rapidly in the excessive joy of his return. Everything seemed quiet and peaceful in the house; there was no change except perhaps that the grape-vine twined more luxuriantly about the windows, which was glowing

with the rays of the setting sun. The front door was open, and one of the shutters also stood ajar to allow the refreshing breeze to enter. Leo entered the door quickly, and looked into the room where his mother was usually to be found. It was empty. He hurried out into the garden. There he saw his brother with a spade.

"Willy! Brother Willy!" he cried.

The lad looked up; a flash of joy lighted his face, he dropped his spade, and threw himself into Leo's extended arms, on Leo's breast, with the cry of, "Brother! My Brother!"

"And God has brought you home then safely, my dear, dear brother," shouted Willy. "Oh mother and I have prayed for you every day, and have begged the Lord to protect you; and see, now, here you are handsomer, and sturdier than ever. How happy mother will be, when she sees you. Come quick and see her!"

"Then mother is alive? Is she well? and does she still love me?" asked Leo.

"Alive, well, and full of love for you," replied Willy. "How can you doubt it? Come, come! You will find her certainly in your little garret room. She is often there, especially in the evening, thinking of you. Come, Leo!"

The two lads turned to go to the house; but as they turned around they met her, and Leo fairly screamed: "My mother!"

Yes, it was his mother. There she stood in the door—pale, and trembling. A tear was in her eye, but a smile upon her lips, and infinite tenderness in the glance which she cast upon Leo.

She extended her arms, but she was too weak to take a step towards him. The indescribable blessing of his return had overpowered her. But Leo was at her side in an instant, and his arms encircled her frail form. "My mother!" "My dear, dear son!" These were the only words that their trembling lips uttered. Then the mother wept, kissed her long absent son, and gently whispered: "Thanks, thanks, O Lord, for this

happiness! My boy, my dear boy, once more rests on my bosom!"

Willy stood by his mother's side weeping and pressing his brother's hand, which he had seized and would not let go. Old Martin, rubbing his rough hands over his moist eyes, said, "Well, God knows it—but for such a reunion I would spend another winter in Spitzbergen. This is the joy which the angels in heaven might delight to witness."

Indeed it was a deep, all-pervading joy that filled the hearts of these happy people. It was so deep and all-pervading that it sweetened the recollection of the bitter minutes and hours of their separation and sorrow, the sleepless, anxiously wakeful nights of the mother and the severe privations and perils of the son. All, all was forgotten in those few moments of rapturous delight.

When night was closing around them, Leo recollected for the first time, his faithful companion, and told his mother and brother, in a few words, what he owed to the friendship of the brave Martin.

It was then to them as though the honest Pilot were a member of the family, and he became quite confused under the warm expressions of affection and love which came from them all. To conceal his emotion, he blustered out some rough sailors' jokes, and only resumed his habitual, quiet calmness, when he was speaking of the sad days of the past, and describing the sufferings and perils they had undergone. Then he talked away rapidly, and lost no opportunity to set forth with much commendation, the courage, bravery, and endurance of his young friend, Leo.

Five or six days passed away very rapidly, when Martin said in the evening, that it was time to go to Bremen, as his furlough was nearly at an end. Leo also must go along to draw his own pay. The mother inquired anxiously whether Leo intended to continue on the vessel, and was happy in learning that he designed

leaving it to return home and resume his old employment, as fisherman. Their departure for Bremen was fixed for the next day, and Martin was made to promise that he would spend the next winter with his young friend's family; which promise he gave willingly.

As they were eating an early breakfast, the next morning, Martin suddenly hearing the rolling of a carriage, hastened to the window, and remarked that it was steering directly for the house. The rest came to the window in astonishment. The carriage rolled rapidly up the hill, stopped at the door, and out of it sprang, to the surprise of Martin and Leo, Conrad Elshöft—the companion of their sufferings. At first glance, they scarcely knew him. He was dressed fashionably, and an unusual paleness covered his face. However they ran out quickly, and, after a hearty shaking of hands, brought him into the house.

"What wind blows you here, Conrad?" said Martin, after the new-comer had

been introduced to Leo's mother and brother. "I imagined that you would be taking your ease with your relatives in Elsfeldt, but here you come, sailing along with two horses and a strange rigging. What news do you bring? Good news, I hope."

"Good for Leo and his family, even if sad and very humiliating to me," replied Conrad, in a low, depressed tone. "I came to beg your pardon, and to make restitution for past injury. Yes," he continued in a louder tone, "I will make restitution and confess my own faults, although I should draw down your contempt and hatred upon my head by doing so."

"He who confesses his sins, forsakes and tries to atone for them in the blood of Christ, need expect no contempt from honest men," said Martin. "Speak out freely, my lad! We learned to know you as a good comrade, and therefore you can rely upon our friendship. Is it not so, Leo?"

Leo, instead of giving an answer, seized

Conrad's hand affectionately, and the latter breathed more freely at this manifestation of attachment.

"Well, then," he said, "listen to my confession, and be gentle in your judgment upon a penitent sinner. I must acknowledge that I told you an untruth, when I said that I was not the son of the man, who had been the cause of so much unhappiness to this good woman. That man Elshöft was my father, and I am his legitimate son and heir."

Martin shook his head sadly, Willy knit his brow, and the mother looked anxiously at Leo. The latter, however, said mildly: "Do not condemn him! It was not Conrad who inflicted sorrow and suffering upon us, and he must not be made answerable for his father's acts."

"It wasn't your fault that you were obliged to be ashamed of your father. In this particular, you are to be pitied but not condemned, my lad. You were very wrong, however, in telling the untruth,

for truth is always an obligation. But, what else is there?"

"On my return to my father's house," Conrad continued in a more vigorous tone of voice, "I examined my father's books and papers, and found that he—that he yes, the truth must come out—that he had deceived you, my good woman. The lost vessel, the Uranus, had been insured for eighty thousand dollars, and the amount paid for the insurance, as this paper shows, was divided equally between your husband and my father. Receive now from my hands your property with the legal interest due thereon. These papers, which you can readily convert into money, have been drawn for the full amount due you."

All were speechless, while Conrad handed the package of papers to Leo's mother. Martin at last broke the silence; standing up and pressing Conrad's hand as though it were a vice, he said: "Lad, you are an honest fellow! Old Martin declares this, and woe be to him who doubts

it. What you may have done otherwise in thought against us, I, for my part, pardon you from the bottom of my soul."

"Oh no, oh no-first hear all, and then-pronounce sentence!" replied Conrad, with tremulous voice. "Another crime, or at least an attempt to commit it, weighs upon my conscience. Do you recollect that Leo fell overboard, at his first assault on the first whale we attacked? It was I who gave the boat such a shove that he was compelled to fall. I hoped that he would meet his death in the waves, so that my father and myself might be spared the disgrace of the discovery of the fraud. God in His mercy frustrated my design, but I am guilty of the crime and ready to suffer any punishment you may impose upon me."

"Oh Conrad!" cried Leo, embracing the penitent lad—"You have made sufficient restitution by acknowledging your guilt. And, besides, did you not save my life in the struggle with the polar bear, and that must be reckoned as sufficient atonement. I have no grudge against you, Conrad, and God, who looks into our hearts, knows that I esteem you now dearer and better than ever! No, no, you have made atonement enough for me."

The mother and Willy spoke in the same strain, and a heavy load seemed to have been removed from Conrad's oppressed heart. He breathed freely, and looking upwards, said: "As you, whom I have so grievously injured, pardon me, I hope God, in His infinite mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour, will also pardon my numerous offences! I feel myself free and happy, and will lift up my heart to God with fresh hope. May He bless you, for your mild judgment! You have made me a happy man!"

Renewed assurances of true, unalloyed love and friendship followed this outburst of feeling from Conrad. Leo took the papers, and held them in his hand, somewhat undecided.

"I must take some of this money, to lessen the troubles of life for my dear mother, but if you are in need of money, take half of the whole, and keep it."

"No, I do not need it," replied Conrad.

"My father, although he always represented himself as a poor man, left behind him a large property. I need nothing but your forgiveness and friendship."

"That you have, and the future will show that it is given from the heart," said Leo. "He who repents, and makes restitution, as you have done, richly deserves the friendship of all good men. But let us all return thanks to the Lord. He was blessing us when He seemed to be punishing us with sufferings, hardships, and trials, and there has been literally fulfilled in us what the Apostle says: 'Whom the Lord Loveth He chasteneth.'"

All reflected in silence over these words, and a deep, firm, and unshaken trust in the Lord God was the most beautiful fruit of the sufferings which they

had undergone with patient hearts. The blessing did not fail them. The way of their earthly pilgrimage was still a long one, adorned by those bright flowers, which spring up from the fruitful soil of true Christian piety and uprightness. Virtuously follow in all your life the precepts of our divine Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

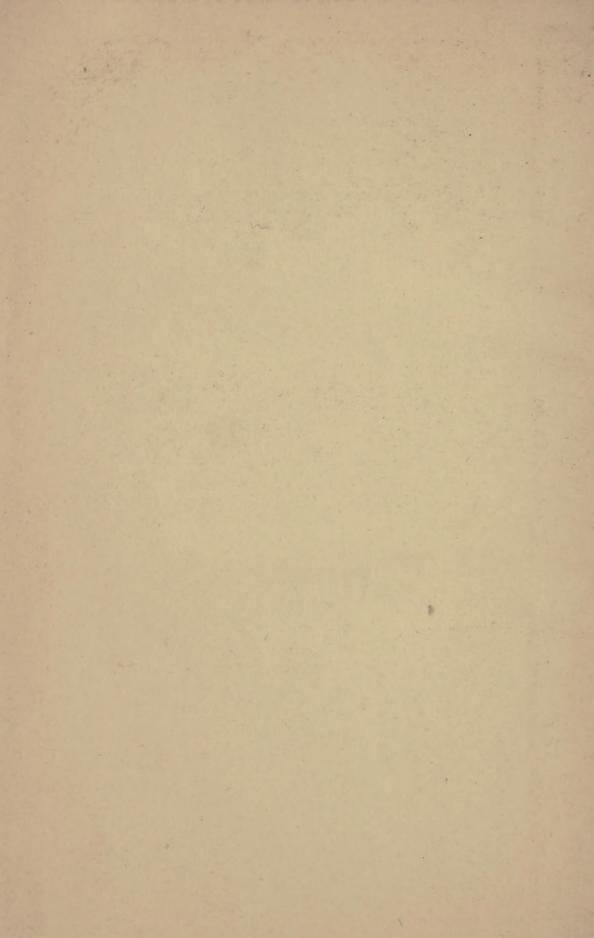


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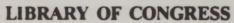














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